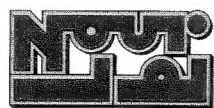


# AFTER TIMUR



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# AFTER TIMUR

Qur'ans of the  
15th and 16th centuries

by David James



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# Contents

8	FOREWORD
10	AFTER TIMUR
PART I: QUR'ANS OF THE 15TH CENTURY	
14	IRAN UNDER THE TIMURIDS AND TURKOMANS
16	Catalogue number 1
18	The 'Baysunghur' Qur'an
24	Catalogue numbers 2-9
46	EGYPT AND SYRIA UNDER THE CIRCASSIAN MAMLUKS
48	Catalogue numbers 10-16
69	THE FIRST QUR'ANS FROM CONSTANTINOPLE
70	Catalogue numbers 17-26
102	INDIA IN THE AGE OF BIHARI
104	Catalogue numbers 27-29
PART II: QUR'ANS OF THE 16TH CENTURY	
113	IRAN UNDER THE EARLY SAFAVIDS
116	Catalogue numbers 30-38
144	Ruzbihan Muhammad of Shiraz
150	Catalogue numbers 39-51
214	LATE SULTANATE AND EARLY MUGHAL INDIA
216	Catalogue numbers 52-53
224	THE AGE OF AHMED KARAHISARÎ
228	Catalogue numbers 54-60
244	Concordances
245	Documentation
251	Bibliography
255	Index

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# Foreword

Islamic manuscripts form one of the great intellectual and artistic patrimonies of mankind. Their importance has long been recognized in the non-Muslim West, where private individuals and public institutions have been collecting them for at least four centuries, but most are still to be found in the lands where they were made. Despite the efforts of several Muslim governments in the Near East and beyond and of institutions such as the Manuscript Commission of the League of Arab States, neither the total number of these works nor a full list of their locations can be given. This is so even in the case of Arabic manuscripts, the most extensively studied group. Nevertheless, it is clear that the numbers involved are considerable. A substantial proportion of these contain the text of the Holy Qur'an, for no other work can have been copied out by hand so often in the course of the last 1400 years. The majority of surviving Qur'ans are simply written and sparsely illuminated, but many are magnificent examples of the arts of the calligrapher and the illuminator.

The largest and finest collection of Qur'ans is undoubtedly that of the Topkapı Palace Library in Istanbul, which contains the major part of the former imperial library of the Ottoman sultans. There are also important collections in the library attached to the Astan-i Quds-i Rizavi, the shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad; in the Museum of Ancient Iran in Tehran; in the National Library in Cairo; and in various libraries and museums in India. While circumstances have made the huge Topkapı collection well-nigh comprehensive, the others are not only smaller but have a more regional bias.

Collecting activity in Europe and North America has led to the accumulation of large numbers of Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts, and as a matter of course these have included copies of the Qur'an. The main collection of Qur'ans outside the Muslim world are to be found in the British Library in London, in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, in the Vatican Library in Rome, and in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. However, with the exception of the Chester Beatty Library, the acquisition of this material was never pursued as systematically as in the case of literary, historical and scientific manuscripts. Even though the text of the Qur'an is invariable, palaeographic, aesthetic or historical criteria could have been used to determine what entered these collections, but, with the one exception, no attempt was made to apply such criteria.

It was with an awareness of the need for a consistent approach of this kind that I began to form a collection of Qur'anic manuscripts some 20 years ago. During this time attempts have been made to secure examples from every period and from every part of the Islamic world. As a result the body of material acquired is notable for the wide range it covers. This material can now be used to illustrate the entire spectrum of Qur'anic manuscript development, and, as there are often several examples from the same period, comparisons can be made both within the period and between contemporary manuscripts from different areas. The items in the Collection are of great historical and aesthetic importance. These have been conserved and, where appropriate, restored, and in some cases this has led to interesting discoveries.

The Qur'anic manuscripts that I have brought together are now to be published as the first four volumes of a general catalogue of the Collection. The first volume will cover the Qur'anic material in the three major styles that developed before AD 1000; the second encompasses material produced between AD 1000 and AD 1400; the third continues the task to the end of the 16th century; and the fourth includes the Qur'ans of the 17th century and later. My hope is that, when the publication of these four volumes is completed, they will constitute the most comprehensive survey of Qur'anic calligraphy and illumination yet undertaken. For their help

achieving this aim my thanks are due to Dr François Déroche, the author of the volume on the earliest items, and Dr David James, author of the two succeeding volumes. My thanks are also due to Gordon Robertson and Christopher Phillips for their photography; to Don Baker and Henrietta Spink for their work on the conservation and restoration of the Collection; to Yasin Safadi, head of the Arabic section at the British Library, Nabil Saidi, Manijeh Bayani-Wolpert, Dr Marian Wenzel, and, most especially, Nahla Nassar, the assistant curator of the Khalili Collection, for helping with various aspects of the cataloguing work; and to the production team who worked so hard to produce these catalogues, Dr Julian Raby, Tim Stanley, Helen and Misha Anikst and Lorna Raby.

Nasser D. Khalili  
London 1992

# After Timur

During the 15th and 16th centuries the military, economic and political might of the Islamic world reached a new high point. In the western Mediterranean, Islamic power was in retreat, and the collapse of the Nasrid sultanate of Granada at the end of the 15th century led to the extinction of the Islamic civilization of Spain. This setback was more than balanced by developments in the East, where the defining factor in the development of Islamic civilization after 1400 was the career of the Central Asian conqueror Timur. Even though the vast empire he created disintegrated rapidly after his death, the artistic patronage of Timur and his descendants had a particularly strong influence on their successors and neighbours. Styles of miniature painting, illumination, bookbinding and *nasta'liq* calligraphy that originated at the Timurid courts of Samarkand, Herat and Shiraz were to inspire artists and calligraphers from Istanbul to Agra. The models provided by this 'Timurid International' style continued to be employed after the turbulence of the 15th century had given way to the relative stability of the 16th, when the Ottomans held sway in the eastern Mediterranean, the Safavids ruled Iran, and the Mughals were the foremost power in India. Although the arts in each of these regions had their own special traits, they were united by this common stylistic heritage.

By 1400 Timur had established himself as the greatest Central Asian warlord since Chingiz Khan and had made Samarkand his capital. He used this city as a base to invade India, Syria and Anatolia and to mop up the minor states of Iran and Iraq. There can be no doubt that the man was a ruthless megalomaniac, but the dynasty he established at the price of colossal human suffering survived for little more than two generations after his death in 1405. Any pretensions to suzerainty over Timur's victims in Anatolia, Syria and India had to be abandoned at once, and within 50 years Iraq and western Iran were in the hands of the Turkoman confederations of the Qaraqoyunlu and the Aqqoyunlu. By 1501 the Safavids had replaced both the Turkomans in the west and the Timurids in the east, and for the next two centuries one dynasty ruled the whole of Iran.

At the time of Timur's invasions of Anatolia, most of the region was under the control of the Ottoman dynasty. Although the Ottomans' army was routed at the battle of Ankara in 1402, this proved only a temporary setback in their rise to power. In 1453 Constantinople fell to their besieging army; in 1514 the Safavids were defeated at the battle of Chaldiran; and in 1516 and 1517 the Mamluk state was swept away, and its territories in Egypt and Syria annexed. The Ottomans were victorious in subsequent campaigns in Iraq and Azerbaijan, and they also proved capable of defeating European armies on their own territory, the first Islamic power to do so since the Arab conquest of Sicily and the Iberian peninsula. Vast tracts of south-east and eastern Europe came under Muslim rule as the Ottomans absorbed a myriad of small states and then crushed Hungary, their main rival in the region.

The third great Islamic empire that rose to prominence in the 16th century was that of the Mughal dynasty in India. The Mughals not only saw themselves as the cultural heirs of Timur but were also proud to acknowledge him as their progenitor, for their line was founded by Babur, a descendant of the conqueror in the fifth generation. For a brief period Timur had occupied northern India, and this gave Babur the pretext to claim the territory as his own. It took 30 years, and a series of military successes and reverses, before the Mughals were able to establish themselves permanently in their new home, but from the middle of the 16th century the northern regions of the subcontinent were firmly under their control.

The Qur'ans and other manuscripts produced in the eastern Islamic world after 1400 reflect the relative importance of the regions in which they were made. Iran played a central role

in the development of Islamic art at this time, and the manuscripts produced there both for the Timurids and for their Qaraqoyunlu and Aqqoyunlu rivals are notable for their number, quality and stylistic coherence. This was in contrast to the position elsewhere: in the Mamluk empire the standard of manuscript production was considerably lower than it had been in the 14th century, and innovation was confined to the import of motifs from Iran; in the Ottoman state, several traditions existed side by side, so that manuscripts made at Istanbul soon after the city's conquest are often technically accomplished but stylistically uncoordinated; and so few of the manuscripts produced in India at this time have survived that no conclusions can be drawn on developments there.

The emergence of the Safavids at the beginning of the 16th century did not immediately produce any stylistic changes in the manuscripts produced in Iran, but in the second quarter of the century new elements such as polychrome floral scrolls with large fleshy leaves began to appear. The artists working under the Safavid shahs do not seem to have been affected by the discipline that kept the Timurid traditions of Qur'anic and secular illumination apart. As a result, the differences between the two disappeared, giving rise, for example, to the indiscriminate use in both religious and literary manuscripts of Chinese-inspired cloud-band motifs, which were often painted in several different colours within the same composition.

The rise of the Safavids coincidentally ensured the continued predominance of Timurid and Turkoman artistic traditions in the Ottoman empire and in Mughal India, where large numbers of Iranian artists fled for religious, political and economic reasons. In the second half of the century, Ottoman Qur'an illumination began to include the new decorative elements that had first appeared in secular manuscripts. These included motifs of Safavid origin, such as the cloud band, as well as forms developed locally out of the original Timurid repertory, the most prominent example of which is a combination of rosettes and large, serrated *saz* leaves. A more interesting development was the introduction of naturalistically drawn plants and details by the master illuminator Kara Memi, who is known to have worked on several Qur'ans, but his experimental style was short-lived, and by the end of the century Ottoman Qur'an illumination was showing signs of becoming dull and repetitive as the same formulae were used again and again. The fate of the Timurid tradition in India is more difficult to trace, as there are very few examples of Qur'ans made for imperial patrons in the 15th and 16th centuries, but the situation was probably similar to that in the Ottoman empire.

The finest Ottoman illuminators were found at the royal court in Istanbul, although some of these artists undoubtedly worked for clients outside the court as well. In Iran the best illuminators were not confined to the capital, and throughout the 15th and 16th centuries the provincial city of Shiraz continued to be a major centre for manuscript production. Some of the work produced there is in as fine a style as anything made at Tabriz or Qazvin. Some of the best Shirazi Qur'ans may in fact have been made for the court, although almost none bears a certificate of commissioning giving the name of the patron. However, we do know that Shirazi scribes and illuminators of the late 15th century were commissioned to produce manuscripts for the Aqqoyunlu court at Tabriz, including an outstanding example in the Khalili Collection, cat. 8 below. This practice certainly did not come to an end with the establishment of the Safavids, and some of the finer 16th-century Qur'ans of Shiraz can only have been destined for a court patron. Another superb manuscript in the Khalili Collection, cat. 43 below, is dated 1552 and may have been owned by Shah Tahmasp before being passed as a gift to the Mughal emperors.



Two major calligraphic developments can be observed in Iranian Qur'ans of the 15th and 16th centuries. The first was the dominance of *naskh* as the main Qur'anic hand; *nasta'liq* developed rapidly in the 15th century, but it was used only for literary and diplomatic purposes. The second was the division of the text on each page into blocks in which different scripts were used. The division was emphasized by the use of gold and coloured rules to create a panel for each block of text. The larger blocks were almost always in *naskh* and were interspersed with single lines in larger *muḥaqqaq* or *thulth*. This practice goes back to the 12th century, but it became common only in the 15th; by the 16th century, it was the standard layout for monumental Qur'ans. Both of these features can also be seen in Ottoman Qur'ans, although the practice of combining different scripts on the same page was much rarer. Ottoman Qur'anic calligraphy was dominated by Şeyh Hamdullah, whose distinctive type of *naskh* became the standard form not long after his death in 1520. At about the same time, a major change took place in Qur'an production in India, when the *biḥārī* script, a peculiarly Indian form, was replaced by *naskh* or a combination of *naskh* and *muḥaqqaq*.

In the 16th century it became the normal practice for Iranian scribes to add one or both of two appendices at the end of a Qur'an manuscript. One of these was a *du'ā-i khatm*, a prayer said on concluding a reading of the Qur'anic text; the other was a *fālnāmah*, a treatise explaining the values of the letters of the Arabic script and how to use them for divining the future. These texts were often superbly written and illuminated. This extension of the decorated area also occurred in other parts of the manuscript. Until the 15th century the illuminated areas of finer manuscripts usually included a frontispiece, the opening and closing pages of text, the surah headings, and, occasionally, a finispiece, but in the 16th century these were augmented by a pair of roundels placed before the frontispiece and the pages marking the half-way point in the text. In Ottoman Qur'ans, on the other hand, the illuminated areas were reduced as the 16th century progressed, and by the end of the century the decoration was usually confined to the opening and closing pages of text.

The developments in Qur'an production in the 16th century determined the character of Qur'ans for the century after 1600, which was a period of consolidation for the three great Islamic empires. After 1700, however, all three fell under strong European influence in the visual arts, as well as in military and economic matters. In Turkey the result was a series of styles in which Islamic and European elements were successfully blended. Even Qur'an illumination did not escape this trend, and 'baroque' and 'rococo' features can be seen in both religious manuscript illumination and architectural decoration. Calligraphy was the main exception, for it continued to develop within its own terms, and some of the greatest masters of this art worked in the 18th and 19th centuries.

PART I  
Qur'ans of the  
15th Century

# Iran under the Timurids and Turkomans

At the beginning of the 15th century AD Iran formed part of the empire established by the great Turco-Mongol conqueror Timur. After Timur's death in 1405, his descendants continued to rule from Herat in eastern Iran, but in western Iran their power was steadily eroded by the Qaraqoyunlu Turkomans, who had made Tabriz their capital. The Qaraqoyunlu eventually took control of the whole of western and southern Iran, but in 1467 they were overthrown by the Aqqoyunlu, their Turkoman rivals from eastern Anatolia. For the rest of the century the country was divided between the Timurids in the east and the Aqqoyunlu in the west.

During the period between the death of Timur and the fall of the Aqqoyunlu and Timurid states in the first decade of the 16th century, Iran was the setting for a flowering of the arts of the book on an unprecedented scale. The Timurid and Turkoman courts lavished their resources on calligraphy, miniature painting and the other crafts associated with manuscript production, and the large numbers of finely illustrated works produced in Herat, Tabriz and other centres at this time are justly famous. Unillustrated manuscripts were produced in even greater numbers, and many were superbly illuminated in one of three new styles.

The type of illumination based on geometric forms that had been in vogue for most of the 14th century had entirely disappeared by the beginning of the 15th. It was replaced by illumination in which extensive use was made of gold floral sprays, often with coloured blossoms, on a blue ground. This early Timurid style is first known from work done in Shiraz in the 1370s, when parts of a mid-14th century Qur'an left undecorated by its original patron were illuminated for Turanshah, a minister of the city's Muzaffarid rulers.<sup>1</sup> While Chinese-inspired motifs introduced at an earlier date, such as knots and cicada shapes, had disappeared by the end of the 14th century, other motifs from the same source first made their appearance in the new style. The most notable was the cartouche with cusped ends, which was derived from the Chinese *jui* sceptre and was used extensively in frontispieces and other larger areas of illumination.<sup>2</sup>

The early Timurid style gave way to a more polished manner in which foliate arabesque scrolls and palmettes were often combined with interlocking cartouches. Most manuscripts with this type of decoration seem to have been produced at Tabriz and Herat, but it is also known from work done in Shiraz. In the second half of the 15th century a third style became current in the cities ruled by the Aqqoyunlu Turkomans, particularly Tabriz and Shiraz. The basic components were the same as before, but they were frequently combined in geometric configurations, and work in this style often has a hard, bright, enamel-like quality. This stylistic evolution was gradual, and it was not unknown for more than one style to be in use in one place at the same time, particularly with regard to work done in the Turkoman courts.

In contrast to the huge multi-volume Qur'ans that were typical of the 14th century, 15th-century Qur'ans were generally of modest proportions. They were usually copied in the form of *naskh* associated with the 13th-century Baghdadi calligrapher Yaqut al-Musta'simi.<sup>3</sup> By the 15th century Yaqut's form of *naskh* had become the universal model for this style of script, and many facsimile copies of manuscripts in his hand seem to date from this period.<sup>4</sup> There is a tendency to dismiss these facsimiles as forgeries even though we have no clear idea of the circumstances in which they were produced. Some were undoubtedly produced with the intention of deceiving a potential purchaser, but others may well have been made for honest reasons at a time when no other means of reproducing the work of the master existed.

Although larger copies of the Qur'an became rarer, they were still produced, generally in the *muḥaqqaq* script. The best known example is the enormous Qur'an associated with the

Timurid prince Baysunghur. This manuscript appears to have been made for the vast mosque that Timur had built in Samarqand, but it is doubtful whether Baysunghur was the calligrapher.<sup>5</sup> Cat. 2 consists of a fragment of a page from this Qur'an, while cat. 3 demonstrates the lasting impression this work created, for it is either a later copy of one of the Baysunghur pages that is now lost, or it is a piece made in the 18th or 19th century in emulation of its style.

Without doubt the finest manuscript from 15th-century Iran in the Khalili Collection is cat. 9, which was produced for an unknown patron in Aqqoyunlu Shiraz or Tabriz *circa* 1480–90. The quality of this manuscript is equal to that of the very best examples made for the ruling clan of the Aqqoyunlu, such as a Qur'an made for Uzun Hasan, the founder of their fortunes, in 1471 and the 30-part copy written by Zayn al-'Abidin ibn Muhammad al-Katib al-Shirazi for Uzun Hasan's son Ya'qub Beg in 1483.<sup>6</sup> This suggests that cat. 9, too, was produced for a member of the royal household or a high-ranking official. The manuscript has retained its original binding, and this and the frontispiece are notable for the extent to which they presage Ottoman work of the 16th century. It is also probable that another Qur'an in the Khalili Collection, cat. 10, was produced for an Aqqoyunlu patron, for its decoration and binding resemble those of the Qur'an made for Ya'qub Beg in 1483.

The Collection also includes a number of fine manuscripts produced in the Timurid empire, and two of these can be associated with the ruling family. One is cat. 2, the fragment of the so-called Baysunghur Qur'an; the other is cat. 4, which was copied in 1420 by a calligrapher who worked for Ibrahim Sultan while he was governor of Shiraz between 1414 and 1434. Other manuscripts in the Collection lack any explicit connection with the Timurid court but are none the less of the highest quality. Cat. 5, for example, dates from the early Timurid period and contains illumination that is on a par with some of the finest work done for Prince Baysunghur in Herat, while cat. 1 consists of two pages from a manuscript that must, in its original state, have been one of the calligraphic masterpieces of the age. It was not a complete Qur'an but contained only the five surahs beginning with the phrase *Al-hamdu li'llāh* ('Praise be to God'). The pages are large, and the magnificent calligraphy is of a standard comparable only with the Qur'ans of Ibn al-Suhrawardi from the early 14th century and of Ibrahim Sultan from the beginning of the 15th century. According to an uncorroborated report, the name of the outstanding master who produced this work was Karamshah Tabrizi, who is otherwise unknown.

1. See *The Khalili Collection*, II, pp. 122–4 and cat. 30.

2. Rawson 1984, chapter 4.

3. See *The Khalili Collection*, II, pp. 58–9.

4. See *The Khalili Collection*, II, cat. 12–15, for example.

5. See pp. 18–23 below.

6. Mashhad, Astan-i Quds Library, MS. 137 (Ma'ani 1347, cat.no.64);

and Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, MSS 1501–2 (Arberry 1967, cat.nos 147–8; and Faza'ili 1971, p. 333).

## I

## Two folios

Iraq or Iran, circa AD 1350–1420

Both folios 43 × 33.5 cm, with  
5 lines to the page

*Material* A very heavy, floccular  
buff paper, lightly polished,  
with no visible details

*Text area* 36 × 27.5 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 7.4 cm

*Script* The main text in  
muḥaqqaq, incidentals  
in thulth

*Scribe* Perhaps Karamshah Tabrizi

*Accession no.* QUR438

*Comparative items* Geneva 1988,  
cat.nos 23a–b are folios from the  
same manuscript.<sup>1</sup> Compare also  
Mashhad, Astan-i Quds Library,  
MSS416 and 417.<sup>2</sup>

1. Several more pages from this  
manuscript were in the hands of  
London dealers in the same year.

2. Ma'ani 1347, cat.nos 68 and 69;  
Lings 1976, pls 84–5.

3. James 1988, cat.no. 39.

4. Geneva 1988, cat.no. 23b.

5. See cat. 31 in volume II of this  
catalogue, for example.

6. Astan-i Quds Library, MSS416  
and 417. The opening surah is  
copied in gold, and the rest of  
the text in black.

These folios once formed part of a prayer-book which contained the five surahs beginning with the phrase *Al-ḥamdu li'llāh* (I, VI, XVIII, XXXIV and XXXV). The fragment of text they contain is from the end of *Sūrat al-kahf* (XVIII, 109–10) and the beginning of *Sūrat Sabā* (XXXIV, 1–3). The manuscript from which they came must have been one of the finest of its type to have been produced in the late 14th century or the early 15th. According to an uncorroborated source, the calligrapher was a master called Karamshah Tabrizi. If this is correct, it illustrates the paradoxical nature of our knowledge of Islamic calligraphy of this period, for we have few genuine examples of the work of the great masters who were recorded in Islamic literary sources, and yet some of the finest surviving manuscripts are by calligraphers whose names were otherwise unknown.

The script is a magnificent black *muḥaqqaq* outlined in gold and is unusually thin, given its large size. This serves to emphasize the total control of the calligrapher over his pen; such faultless perfection was equalled only by Ibn al-Suhrawardi in the Qur'an he produced in Baghdad in the early years of the 14th century, probably for Ghazan Khan.<sup>3</sup> Cat. 1 and the other material from the same manuscript, published and unpublished, have decorative features that are characteristic of the later 14th century and the early 15th, such as the cartouche with cusped ends.<sup>4</sup> Although examples of this type of cartouche are occasionally found in manuscripts from the first half of the 14th century,<sup>5</sup> the prominent examples we see elsewhere in the manuscript of which cat. 1 formed a part are more characteristic of 15th-century work. The verse-markers are in the form of geometric knots, a type found in 15th-century manuscripts such as two sections from a fine Qur'an now in Mashhad.<sup>6</sup> The Mashhad sections, which are undated but were certainly produced in the first quarter of the 15th century, are also similar to cat. 1 in their size, the quality of the script and other aspects of their decoration. On the other hand, cat. 1 has no trace of the gold floral sprays so typical of early 15th-century Timurid illumination. A full study of these questions must await the publication of more pages from this manuscript.

لِقَابِهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا

وَلَا يَشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ

# The 'Baysunghur' Qur'an

## A History and Reconstruction

Among the holdings of the Khalili Collection there is a piece of heavy cream paper measuring  $24 \times 96.5$  cm which bears a single line of Qur'anic text copied out in a large *muhaqqaq* hand.<sup>1</sup> This item is a small fragment of a celebrated Qur'an which has come to be associated with the name of the Timurid prince Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh. The main cause of its fame is its vast size, for the complete pages that survive measure about  $177 \times 101$  cm. The text of this Qur'an was copied in seven lines on one side of each of these enormous sheets, the other side being left blank. Assuming that the entire text of the Qur'an was transcribed, approximately 800 bifolios would have been required to contain it.<sup>2</sup> Before 1980 the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an was known mainly from material that had entered public collections in Iran, but during the subsequent decade several fragments appeared on the art market in Europe, including one complete page that was auctioned in London in 1988,<sup>3</sup> and other pieces have been acquired privately by museums and collectors. As a result, new interest has been shown in the manuscript, which must have been one of the most splendid copies of the Qur'an ever made.<sup>4</sup>

The association of Baysunghur with this Qur'an dates back at least to the early 19th century, when part of it was seen in Quchan, in north-east Iran, by James Baillie Fraser, himself a noted collector of Oriental manuscripts;<sup>5</sup> but, however attractive the story may be, there is no historical evidence that the famous bibliophile ever undertook so arduous a task as copying out a Qur'an of this size. Even if the calligrapher was able to copy ten pages a day, it would still have taken between six and eight months to complete the work. Such a long period spent working on such an exceptional manuscript could hardly have gone unnoticed by Baysunghur's contemporaries, and the undertaking would almost certainly have been recorded in a contemporary chronicle or in one of the later compilations on the history of calligraphy, as is the case with the inscription he designed for the iwan of the mosque built by his mother, Gawharshad, in Mashhad in 1418.<sup>6</sup> It seems therefore improbable that Baysunghur was the scribe. The attribution to Baysunghur was probably based on circumstantial evidence: at one stage the manuscript seems to have been kept in Timur's mausoleum; Baysunghur was Timur's grandson; and Baysunghur was a competent calligrapher who is known to have worked on a large scale.

The limited nature of the manuscript's original decoration also undermines the attribution to Baysunghur. Most pages were undecorated apart from gold and blue rules around the text. The only other original illumination occurs in the surah headings. These consist of the title and verse-count written in gold *thulth* with blue vocalization and set over arabesque scrolls; these were in turn set on a hatched ground bearing a blue treble-dot motif. If Baysunghur had been the scribe, one would have expected a far more lavish treatment of the illumination, as in the manuscripts made for him in Herat.

### *The case for 'Umar Aqta'*

We cannot rely on the traditional attribution of this great Qur'an to Prince Baysunghur, but a reference in a later source, the *Gulistān-i hunar* of Qazi Ahmad, which was written in the late 16th century, may provide a more plausible account of the manuscript's origins. According to the author of this Persian treatise on calligraphy and painting, a huge Qur'an was made at Samarqand in the time of Timur.<sup>7</sup> The calligrapher 'Umar Aqta' had tried to astonish Timur by writing a Qur'an so small that it could fit under a signet ring, but, when the Lord of Time was unmoved, 'Umar went away and wrote a Qur'an so large that it had to be brought to Timur on a cart. This time the conqueror was impressed by the calligrapher's efforts and rewarded



him on an appropriate scale. 'Umar's achievement was all the more notable in that he only had one hand, his left.

According to Qazi Ahmad, each line of text in the Qur'an, 'was a *zar*' in length or longer'. A *zar*' was approximately 104 cm, which is almost exactly the length of the lines in the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an. Qazi Ahmad also reported that 'Umar bound the manuscript. It could be argued that the 'Baysunghur' pages were never intended to be bound in the manner of a book, for they have text on only one side; although such an arrangement would have been unusual in a bound manuscript, the whole undertaking was highly unusual, and this argument alone cannot rule out the possibility that 'Umar Aqta' was the scribe. It has also been pointed out that two pages placed side by side would fit almost exactly into the gigantic Qur'an stand commissioned by Timur's grandson Ulughbeg for the Great Mosque erected in Samarqand by Timur and now known as the mosque of Bibi Khanum. The close similarity between the dimensions of the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an and those of the stand strongly suggests that the stand was made specifically for this manuscript, which gives substantial support to the theory that the Qur'an was in Samarqand during the early 15th century.<sup>8</sup>

Taken together, these pieces of evidence make it very probable that the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an was made at the end of the reign of Timur, *circa* 1400–1405. This dating accords well with the extraordinary character of the Qur'an, for 'its ostentatious size seems more in keeping with the tastes of a patron like Timur'.<sup>9</sup>

#### *A reconstruction of the manuscript*

As we have seen, pages from the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an were first described in modern times by James Baillie Fraser, who published his account of them shortly after his visit to Quchan as part of a tour of Khurasan in 1821 and 1822. Fraser's account makes interesting reading, and it is possible to attempt a reconstruction of the original Qur'an on the basis of what he says:

'Returning from my ride, I went to see an imaumzadeh, the only piece of antiquity in Cochoon; and, in truth, it would not merit notice at all, except upon one account. There are still preserved there, though in a very careless manner, some leaves that belonged to a Koran of the most magnificent dimensions, perhaps, of any in the world, the history of which is not less interesting than its size is extraordinary. It was written by Boi Sanghor Meerza, the son of Shah Rokh, and grandson of the great Timoor, and laid by him upon the grave of that mighty conqueror, at Samarqand; from whence it was most sacrilegiously taken by the soldiery of Mahomed Khan, grandfather of the present Eelkaneh, who accompanied Nadir Shah in his expedition to Toorkistan: the soldiers broke it up, and each took what leaves he chose to carry, as tokens of his triumph, back to his own country. Meer Goonah Khan, the son, collected about sixty of them, and placed them in this imamzaudeh, where they lie upon a shelf quite neglected and covered with dust. These leaves are formed of a thick wire-wove paper,<sup>10</sup> evidently made for the purpose, and, when opened out, measure from ten to twelve feet long, by seven or eight broad; the letters are beautifully formed, as if they had been each made by a single stroke of a gigantic pen. The nooktas, or vowel points, as well as the marginal and other ornaments, are emblazoned in azure and gold;<sup>11</sup> but few are perfect, having been mutilated for the sake of the ornaments, or the blank paper of the immense margin.'

The pages he saw were 10 to 12 feet in length and 7 to 8 feet in width when opened out. This implies that the pages were bifolios, which normally consist of single sheets of paper folded in two. In this case, each page would have measured at least 7 feet by 5 and at most 8 feet





2

by 6. Sheets of this size can only have been made as single pages, and they must have been joined by a separate 'guard', a relatively common practice when bifolios of exceptional size were required.<sup>12</sup> The size of the written area on the surviving pages measures 5 feet 3 inches by 3 feet 4 inches (177 × 101 cm), and this suggests that the smaller size – 7 feet by 5 – was probably correct. This would give a margin of 10 inches along the sides of each page and a margin of 6 inches at the top and bottom, and the width of the two adjacent margins in the centre of the bifolio would be 20 inches. The sizes of these margins would appear to be big enough to qualify for Fraser's description of them as 'immense'. However, a manuscript measuring 7 feet by 10 (2.17 × 3.10 m) would have been too large to fit exactly into the Qur'an stand made for Ulughbeg, which measures 2.3 × 2 m (7 feet 6 inches by 6 feet 5 inches). Can the discrepancy between the two be reconciled? The difference between the two vertical dimensions – 7 feet 6 inches (2.3 m) for the stand and 7 feet (2.17 m) for the manuscript – presents no problem, but the difference between the two horizontal dimensions – 6 feet 5 inches (2 m) for the stand and 10 feet (3.1 m) for the manuscript – implies that the manuscript projected 2 feet (61 cm) on either side of the stand. This is not impossible by any means, but, if the Qur'an was in Samarkand when the stand was made, it is difficult to understand why it would not have been made to size. The explanation is surely that the dimensions given for the stand are those of its base, and that the dimensions of the v-shaped area where the manuscript rested are, by the laws of geometry, larger.

All the surviving material has the text on one side only, and there is no trace of writing on the reverse of those sheets we have been able to examine. The most likely explanation for this has to do with the method of production. A mould large enough to make paper of this size could not have been dipped into the pulp, so the pulp must have been ladled into the mould. As a result, the top surface would have been too uneven to be used for writing, and the mould side of the paper, the smoother of the two, was therefore used for the text.<sup>13</sup>

No complete bifolios have survived intact, and it is impossible to determine whether they were grouped in quires to be read as they were turned. In this case only the text on the central bifolio would have been continuous. If each bifolio originally contained continuous text, it would have been necessary to remove it from the stand once it was read in order to make way for the next. This would have been a cumbersome, though not an impossible, task for the Qur'an reader's assistants. In any event, given the size of the pages, reading the manuscript must have been an awkward business.

On some of the surviving pieces, the limited decoration applied to the manuscript when it



was first prepared – gold and blue rules around the text and illuminated surah headings – was later supplemented by ornamentation of various kinds which all appears to be of Qajar origin. The later decoration on the published pages seems to consist of floral sprays and a gold background that formed ‘clouds’ of natural ground around the text. One redecorated piece, which consists of two separate fragments combined, is covered with finely painted feather-like floral ornament, but, despite its Ottoman appearance, this decoration is also Qajar.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Later history*

The 19th-century date of the additional illumination on the ‘Baysunghur’ Qur’an accords well with the accounts of its later history. According to several sources, including Fraser, the pages in Quchan had been taken from Samarqand at the time of Nadir Shah’s occupation of the city in the 18th century. One account suggests they were looted by the troops of the shah, who attempted to recover them but with only partial success.<sup>15</sup> According to another version, it was Nadir Shah himself who removed the pages. In any event, part of the looted material was placed in the *imānzādah* of Shahzadah Ibrahim ibn ‘Ali ibn Musa al-Rida in Quchan by the son of the local Kurdish ruler, who had participated in the campaign against Samarqand.

In about 1912, Prince Muhammad Hashim Afshar, the minister for education in Khorasan, retrieved the pages from the ruins in Quchan and brought them to Mashhad. They had suffered further damage when the Quchan *imānzādah* was destroyed by an earthquake in 1895, and only seven were in good condition. They were repaired and framed and put in the Astan-i Quds Library, where five pages were already on display.<sup>16</sup> When the Qajar ruler Nasir al-Din Shah visited Quchan before the earthquake, he ordered that two pages from the Qur’an be brought to Tehran for restoration and placed in the ‘State Museum’, which must be a reference to the Gulistan Palace Library.<sup>17</sup> There are other pages in the library of the Museum of Ancient Iran which must have come from the same source or were perhaps taken from Mashhad.<sup>18</sup> This accounts for the portions of the Qur’an in Mashhad, in the Museum of Ancient Iran and in the Gulistan Library, but not for the pages and fragments in other Iranian collections. Some could be fragments that were brought from Samarqand at the time of its capture by Nadir Shah; some could have been taken from Quchan; and others could have been brought back as souvenirs before Nadir Shah’s looting of the city. Evidence for this last possibility appears in the account of Qazi Ahmad, who mentioned that one folio from the huge Qur’an made for Timur by ‘Umar Aqta’ was in the possession of Mawlana Malik. This was probably Mawlana Malik Daylami, who spent some time in Mashhad about 1556–8, when

Qazi Ahmad was one of his pupils. A further possibility is that some of these pieces were never part of the original 15th-century Qur'an; examination of another item in the Khalili Collection, cat. 3, suggests that this is the case.

Cat. 3 consists of four large fragments which appear to have been created by cutting the text areas of two consecutive pages into four unequal pieces. If the two pages were reassembled, the text areas would measure 168 × 97.5 cm each, the same size as those of pages from the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an. The style of writing is also identical to that in the 15th-century material from this manuscript, and the same orthographic peculiarities are present, such as circular rather than square diacritical points for some of the characters. The four fragments are made

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*Material in public collections*

- 1 Tehran, Riza 'Abbasi Museum: two fragments containing XXIX, 37–8, and LV, 64–7.
- 2 Mashhad, Astan-i Quds Library: seven pages, including XLII, 7–10, and LXXXIX, 1–13.<sup>19</sup>
- 3 Tehran, Gulistan Library, inv. nos 9825–28: four pages, including a passage that runs from LXXXV, 14, to LXXXVI, 2, and part of XXIX.<sup>20</sup>
- 4 Tehran, Malik Library: four half-pages.
- 5 Tehran, Museum of Ancient Iran: one page.
- 6 Tehran, National Library of Iran: 12 fragments, including one that contains XXX, 7–8.
- 7 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 1972.279: a fragment containing XL, 21–2.<sup>21</sup>

*Material in private hands*

- 8 Houston, Soudavar collection: two successive folios containing XLV, 9–13 and 13–16.<sup>22</sup>
- 9 Geneva, private collection: a folio containing XXIX, 25–9.<sup>23</sup>
- 10 Sotheby's 1988, lot no. 168: a folio containing VII, 37–8.
- 11 Sotheby's 1988, lot no. 169: a fragment containing XXIV, 1.
- 12 Sotheby's, Geneva 1985, lot no. 18: a composite fragment made up of LXIV, 3–5 and 7–8.
- 13 Exhibited at the Ahuan Gallery, London, in 1987: a fragment containing XXX, 1.<sup>24</sup>
- 14 Copenhagen, David Collection, inv. no. 20/1987: a fragment containing XXX, 30–31.<sup>25</sup>
- 15 Cat. 2: a one-line fragment containing XXXI, 6.

Four private collections in Iran were recorded as containing portions of the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an in 1949 and again in 1969.<sup>26</sup> The fate of these pieces is unknown, but they may have included items now in Europe and the United States.

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up of several pieces of paper, and the surface has been glazed or varnished, but a close examination of the paper itself has shown that it cannot have been made in the 15th century.

In the course of 1988 and 1989 Don Baker, a London paper restorer, was able to examine two complete pages from the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an under scientific conditions.<sup>27</sup> Both are composed of a complete single sheet of laid paper; there are 4–5 laid lines to the centimetre, and these run along the vertical axis of the paper. The size of the sheets and the wide distribution of the laid lines make this paper unique. There is little doubt that production of some 800 double sheets of enormous size – or 1600 single sheets joined at the centre – must have been a major technical feat for the paper-makers; it had probably never been undertaken before and, as far as we know, was never repeated. Cat. 2 below is on the same paper as these two pages, but the paper

of cat. 3 is quite different. Each of the four panels consists of several pieces of paper, all of which have 11 laid lines to the centimetre. This material is in no way exceptional. It is unlikely to have been made before the 18th century and was probably made later, almost certainly after the removal of the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an from Samarqand in the time of Nadir Shah.

The two pages in the Khalili Collection are, as far as we know, the only facsimiles of the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an to have been identified by a scientific examination of the paper; it seems quite probable that pages in other collections were never part of the original 'Baysunghur' Qur'an and were made in imitation or admiration of it in the 19th or even the 20th century. As a first stage in establishing a complete list of the surviving pages from the original 15th-century manuscript, we have compiled the table on p. 22. Unfortunately, details of the surahs and verses on the pages we know of are often unavailable, and, at this stage, we have no means of identifying which pages are original and which are facsimiles. For these reasons, the list presented here is provisional.

1. See cat. 2 below.
2. Qur'ans in a seven-line format are uncommon. An approximate calculation of the number of folios required can be made on the basis of a two-volume Mamluk Qur'an in the National Library in Cairo (Qur'an MS. 9; see James 1988, cat. no. 31). These two volumes measure 75 × 56 cm, almost exactly half the size of the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an, and the Qur'anic text is copied out in seven lines on 1609 sides (805 folios).
3. Sotheby's 1988, lot no. 168.
4. See Zoka 1969; London 1976, cat. no. 558; Soucek 1979; Geneva 1988, cat. no. 24; James 1989; and Lentz & Lowry 1989, cat. nos 6a-c.
5. Fraser 1825, p. 574.
6. Qazi Ahmad-Minorsky, p. 68.
7. Qazi Ahmad-Minorsky, p. 64.
8. Brandenburg 1972, pp. 100-101. My thanks to Dr Glenn Lowry of the Freer Gallery for giving me this reference. The information in it was incorporated in James 1989, which was written before Dr Stephen Vernoit kindly brought to my attention the account by Fraser quoted below.
9. Brandenburg 1972, *loc. cit.*
10. It is actually laid paper, not wove paper.
11. Fraser must have confused the 'vowel points', by which he presumably meant the diacriticals, with the verse-markers, for the diacriticals are in black, while the verse-markers are indeed 'emblazoned in azure and gold'.
12. See cat. 43 below, for example.
13. I am grateful to Don Baker for pointing this out to me and for several other helpful comments on this essay.
14. Sotheby's Geneva 1985, lot no. 18.
15. Zoka 1969, quoting I'timad al-Saltanah's *Maṭla' al-shams* (Tehran, 1303) and Muhammad Taqi Hakim's *Ganj-i dānish* (Tehran, 1305). The author gives other details on the fate of the Qur'an after it was taken from Samarqand.
16. Zoka 1969, p. 102.
17. Nasir al-Din Shah 1306, p. 134. The Museum of Ancient Iran did not exist at this time. See also Barthold 1984, p. 92, note 21; Atabay 1351, pp. 490-91; and Harāṭī 1987, p. 193.
18. Zoka 1969, *loc. cit.*
19. Ma'ani 1347, cat. no. 59; Harāṭī 1987, p. 193.
20. Atabay 1351, pp. 490-1; Lings 1976, pl. 51.
21. Soucek 1979, ill. 2.
22. Lentz & Lowry 1989, cat. no. 6b-c.
23. Geneva 1985, cat. no. 26; Geneva 1988, cat. no. 24; Lentz & Lowry 1989, cat. no. 6a.
24. London 1987, p. 15.
25. Von Folsach 1990, cat. no. 7.
26. Bayani 1328, cat. nos 33-4; and Zoka 1969, p. 102. Bayani gives the names of the collectors.
27. One page is in a private collection in Geneva and was exhibited at the Zamana Gallery in 1988 (see Geneva 1988, cat. no. 24); the other is the page sold at Sotheby's in 1988 (see James 1989).

## 2

## Fragment of a single folio

Herat or Samarqand, *circa* AD 1400–1405

24 × 96.5 cm, one line of seven  
*Material* The text is on a thick,  
 heavy, polished cream paper, laid,  
 with 5 lines to the centimetre  
*Script* Muḥaqqaq  
*Scribe* Perhaps ‘Umar Aqta’  
*Patron* Perhaps Tīmūr or his  
 grandson Ulughbeg  
*Accession no.* QUR486  
*Comparative items* See table  
 on p. 22

This fragment bears a single line of text from *Sūrat Luqmān* (xxxī), verse 6. The large black *muḥaqqaq* script has black vocalization and red reading notation. The height of the *alif* is 14 cm, and the line of script is 96.5 cm long. The paper has been edged in gold at some stage and is very worn in places, but it is of the same type as the authentic leaves from the so-called Baysunghur Qur’an. This fragment must therefore be a portion of that manuscript.

## 3

## Two pages

Iran, *circa* 1880–1920

Both, 168 × 97.5 cm, with  
 7 lines to the page  
*Material* A deep buff, coated paper,  
 laid, with 11 lines to the centimetre  
*Text area* 168 × 97.5 cm  
*Interlinear spacing* 24 cm  
*Script* Muḥaqqaq  
*Accession no.* QUR596

These two pages, which have no margins bear a consecutive text written on one side only, *Sūrat Sabā* (xxxiv), verses 46–54, and *Sūrat Faṭīr* (xxxv), verse 1. The black *muḥaqqaq* script is of excellent quality and is of the same size and style as the script of the 15th-century Qur’an usually attributed to Prince Baysunghur. The height of the *alif* is 14 cm, and the lines are just under 100 cm long. In some cases the diacriticals are in the form of circles rather than rhomboids, a feature that also occurs on the authentic 15th-century pages from the ‘Baysunghur’ Qur’an. However, the paper on which the text is written is quite different from that used for the genuine 15th-century material from this manuscript: it has twice as many laid lines to the centimetre, and the pages consist of several separate pieces which have been glued down on to a paper base.

It is not possible to determine the date of production from the paper, as it could have been made at any time since the 17th century. However, it is most unlikely that the folios were produced before the appearance of the genuine pages from the ‘Baysunghur’ Qur’an in Tehran and Mashad. Several fragments are known to have been removed to Tehran in the latter part of the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah (1848–96), and others are reported to have been rescued from the ruined *imāmzādah* of Shahzadah Ibrahim at Quchan in about 1912 and placed in the library of the Astan-i Quds at Mashad.



بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَدَابٍ شَدِيدٍ قُلُومًا سَالِكًا

مِنْ أَجْرِ فِعْلٍ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرِ أَجْرٍ عَلَى اللَّهِ

هُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ قُلُومًا سَالِكًا

يَقْدِرُ فَبِالْحَقِّ عَلَامُ الْغُيُوبِ قُلُومًا سَالِكًا

وَمَا يُبْدِي إِلَى الْبَاطِلِ مَا يَعْهَدُ قُلُومًا سَالِكًا

فَلَمَّا أَضَلُّوا عَلَى نَفْسِهِمْ وَأَهْتَدَيْتُمْ فَبِالْحَقِّ

رَبِّ أَنْ يَسْمَعَ قَوْلَهُمْ وَأَنْ يَفْعَلَ مَا يَشَاءُ

## 4

## Single-volume Qur'an

Shiraz, AH823/AD 1420

405 folios, 16.5 × 11.5 cm, with  
12 lines to the page

*Material* A thin, well-beaten and  
polished cream paper, laid, with an  
indeterminate number of lines to  
the centimetre; there are signs of  
chain lines

*Text area* 11.1 × 7.6 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in thulth

*Scribe* (Khwajah Jalal al-Din)

Mahmud, called Qutb

al-Mughaythi al-Sultani

*Patron* Perhaps Ibrahim Mirza ibn  
Shahrukh

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Ottoman, 16th century

*Accession no.* QUR212

*Comparative items* Tehran,  
Gulistan Library, MS. 2;<sup>1</sup> Tehran,  
Malik Library, MS. 5932.<sup>2</sup>

1. Atabay 1351, cat.no. 1; Bayani  
1329, no. 5.

2. Robinson 1988, pp. 91–4.

3. Lentz & Lowry 1989, pp. 364–5.

4. Bayani 1345–58, IV, no. 672.

5. Gulistan Library, MS. 2.

The calligrapher of this manuscript, Khwajah Jalal al-Din Mahmud, is known to have been a pupil of the famous Ja'far Baysunghuri. He was presumably a pupil of Ja'far in Tabriz before 1420, when his master left for Herat to work for the Timurid prince Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh as the head of his manuscript atelier; Mahmud is certainly not mentioned as a member of the staff of the atelier in the *Arzadāsh*t, a document that describes the projects under way in Baysunghur's scriptorium in about 1427.<sup>3</sup> Instead, Mahmud seems to have gone from Tabriz to Shiraz, where he acquired the *nisbah* Mughaythi by entering the service of Baysunghur's brother Mughayth al-Saltanah wa'l-Din Ibrahim Mirza, who was governor of Shiraz between 1414 and his death in 1434.<sup>4</sup> The colophon of cat. 4 shows that Mahmud was in Ibrahim's employment by 1420. Later, perhaps after Ibrahim's death, Mahmud went to work in Herat, where he must have arrived by 1442, for he made a copy of the Qur'an there in that year.<sup>5</sup>

There is one curious anomaly, however. The Malik Library in Tehran possesses a fine little *Anthology* with several paintings in the court style of Iskandar Sultan, Ibrahim Sultan's predecessor as governor of Shiraz. The *Anthology* is signed by 'Mahmud, called Qutb', and there can be little doubt that this is the same person as the scribe of cat. 4. Robinson has attributed the manuscript to the patronage of Iskandar Sultan and dated it between 1405 and 1410. As far as we know, Mahmud was not in Shiraz before Ibrahim Mirza became governor there, and it is far more likely that the *Anthology* in the Malik Library dates from after 1414 if it was copied in Shiraz.

The opening pages of cat. 4 are illuminated in a Timurid style, with the decorated areas divided into cusped panels embellished with feathery floral sprays on a blue ground. The text on subsequent pages is framed by gold and blue rules. Small gold rosettes punctuate the verses. Oval devices in the margin mark each fifth verse, and circular medallions indicate each tenth verse. The surah headings are in gold *thulth* set in white panels with cusped ends. The red morocco Ottoman binding has a central medallion, and the paper doublures have *ebru* decoration.





## Single-volume Qur'an

Herat, circa 1430–1550

292 folios, 33.5 × 22 cm, with  
14 lines to the page

*Material* The text is on a buff paper,  
laid, with 8 lines to the centimetre;  
the margins are of 19th-century  
European watermarked papers

*Text area* 22.7 × 13.3 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1.5 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in thulth

*Binding* 16th century

*Accession no.* QUR642

*Comparative item* Tehran, Gulistan  
Library, *Shāhnāmāh* of Prince  
Baysunghur.<sup>1</sup>

1. A facsimile of this manuscript,  
which has no shelfmark, was  
published anonymously in Tehran  
in AH 1350/AD 1971.

2. See pp. 5–6 and 23–4 of the  
facsimile. The size of the two sets of  
illumination differs by a matter of a  
few centimetres, and a small  
number of details have been altered  
in the course of making the copy.  
We should add that, as far as we  
know, the Baysunghur *Shāhnāmāh*  
has been in the possession of  
successive rulers of Iran since the  
15th century.

3. There are numerous examples of  
loose frontispieces.

4. Astan-i Quds Library, Qur'an  
MS. 414; see Ma'ani 1347, cat. no. 61.

This unique and beautiful manuscript seems to have been assembled in its present form in the 19th century, when repairs were made, and a colophon was added. The finest component is undoubtedly the illuminated pages that form folios 1b–4a. These may be attributed to the Timurid court at Herat, for their decoration is an almost exact copy of the illumination on the opening pages of a *Shāhnāmāh* made for Prince Baysunghur in 1429–30,<sup>2</sup> and there is nothing in their appearance nor in the type of paper used to suggest that they do not also date from the 15th century. We may assume that they were made for a *Shāhnāmāh* that was never finished and were attached to cat. 5 during the manuscript's restoration in the 19th century.<sup>3</sup>

In the *Shāhnāmāh* the illuminated opening pages contain the names of the ancient kings of Iran and a dedication to Prince Baysunghur. In the Qur'an they have been used for a four-page index and two pages of text, which contain *Sūrat al-fātiḥah* (1) and the first verses of *Sūrat al-baqarah* (11) written in a minute white *naskh* but without titles or verse counts. The illuminated pages have been attached to the main body of the manuscript by gluing a leaf bearing *Sūrat al-baqarah*, verses 5–7, on to folio 4b, which seems never to have borne any text. Folio 5 is also a replacement, while folios 6–9 show the traces of several repaired holes. There is no sign of this damage on the illuminated pages, further evidence that they were added to the manuscript during restoration.

The main body of the text was copied in the 15th or 16th century in a form of *naskh* in which final *nūn*, *sīn* etc. are sometimes greatly extended. Alternate lines were written in two shades of gold, and the letters were outlined and vocalized in black. This is a most unusual arrangement, and there do not appear to be any other examples from the period. There are numerous errors in the text, which have been corrected in other hands. The verses are punctuated by gold knots with orange centres and blue dots. Verse-markers of this type are usually found in Qur'ans of the 16th century but were also used in a small number of important 15th-century Qur'ans. The surah headings are in *thulth* and are set in panels whose illumination is quite crude in comparison with that at the beginning of the manuscript. The panels are surrounded by vermillion or bright green lines. These and the pale green, dark red, gold and pale blue rules that frame the text on each page may date from the 19th-century restoration, as the colours used are typical of the border rules in Qajar Qur'ans.

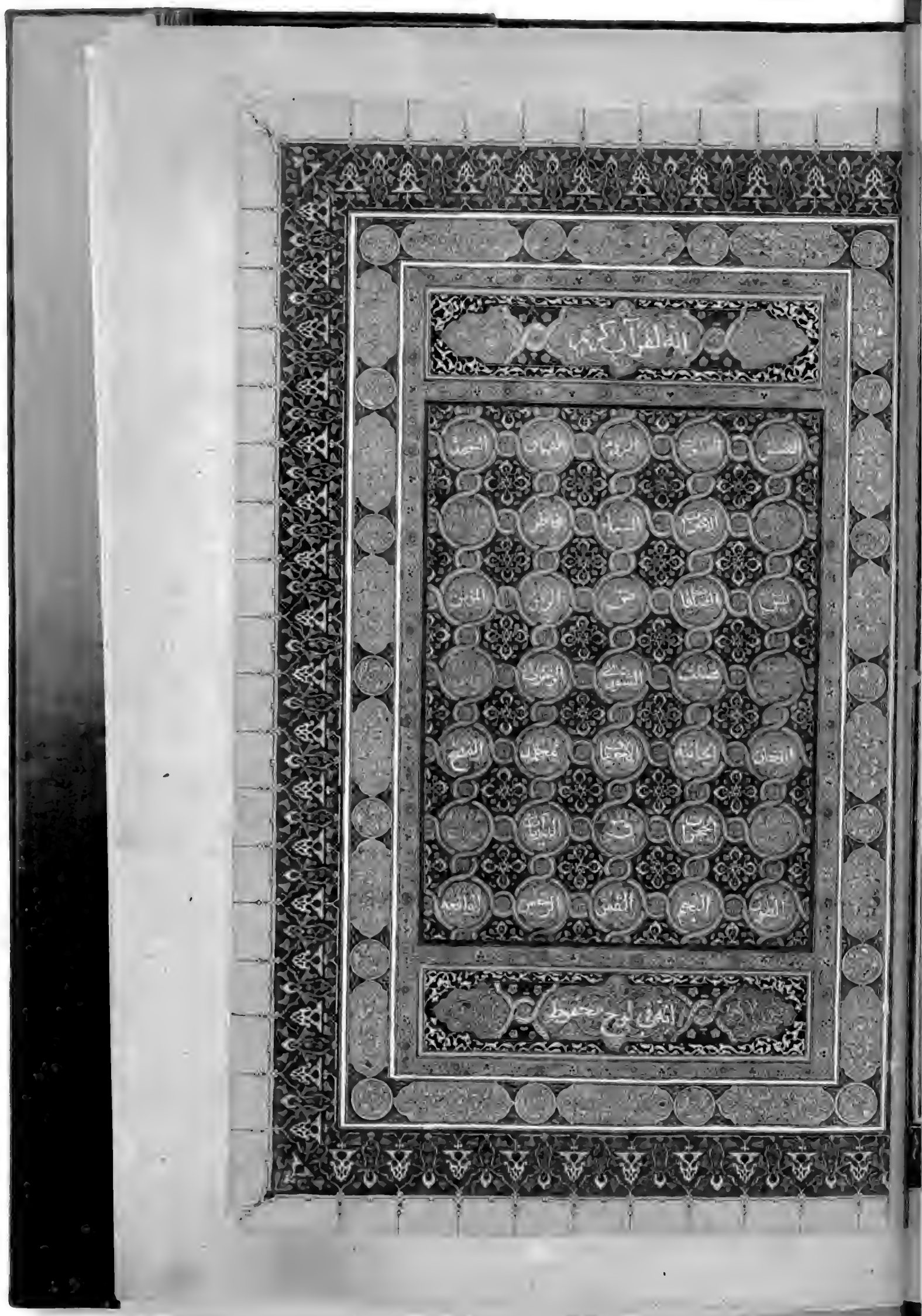
The whole manuscript has been remargined using European paper, and ornaments marking textual divisions have been stuck on to the new margins. These ornaments are of several different types, and they seem to have been taken from two different manuscripts, although they all appear to date from the 16th century. The margins also bear inscriptions in red ink which mark the division of the text into thirtieths and sixtieths, and these are typical of 18th- and 19th-century



5 folios 271b-272a

Qur'ans from Iran. At the foot of the final folio, a gold panel has been painted over a blank panel whose upper edge can still be seen under the gold. The new panel bears a colophon in black in the name of another Timurid prince, Ibrahim Sultan ibn Shahrukh, which must have been added when the illuminated pages were attached at the front. It has the same wording and date as the larger of the two Qur'ans by Ibrahim Sultan now in Mashhad.<sup>4</sup>

The covers have a central field containing a medallion with pendants and corner-pieces. The ground is decorated with arabesques and cloud scrolls, and the surface has been brushed with gilt. Four border cartouches contain *Sūrat Luqmān* (xxxI), verse 27, and *Sūrat al-isrā'* (xvii), verse 88. The doublures are made of brown leather and have a central medallion with pendants and four corner-pieces, all made of gold paper filigree set against coloured grounds.





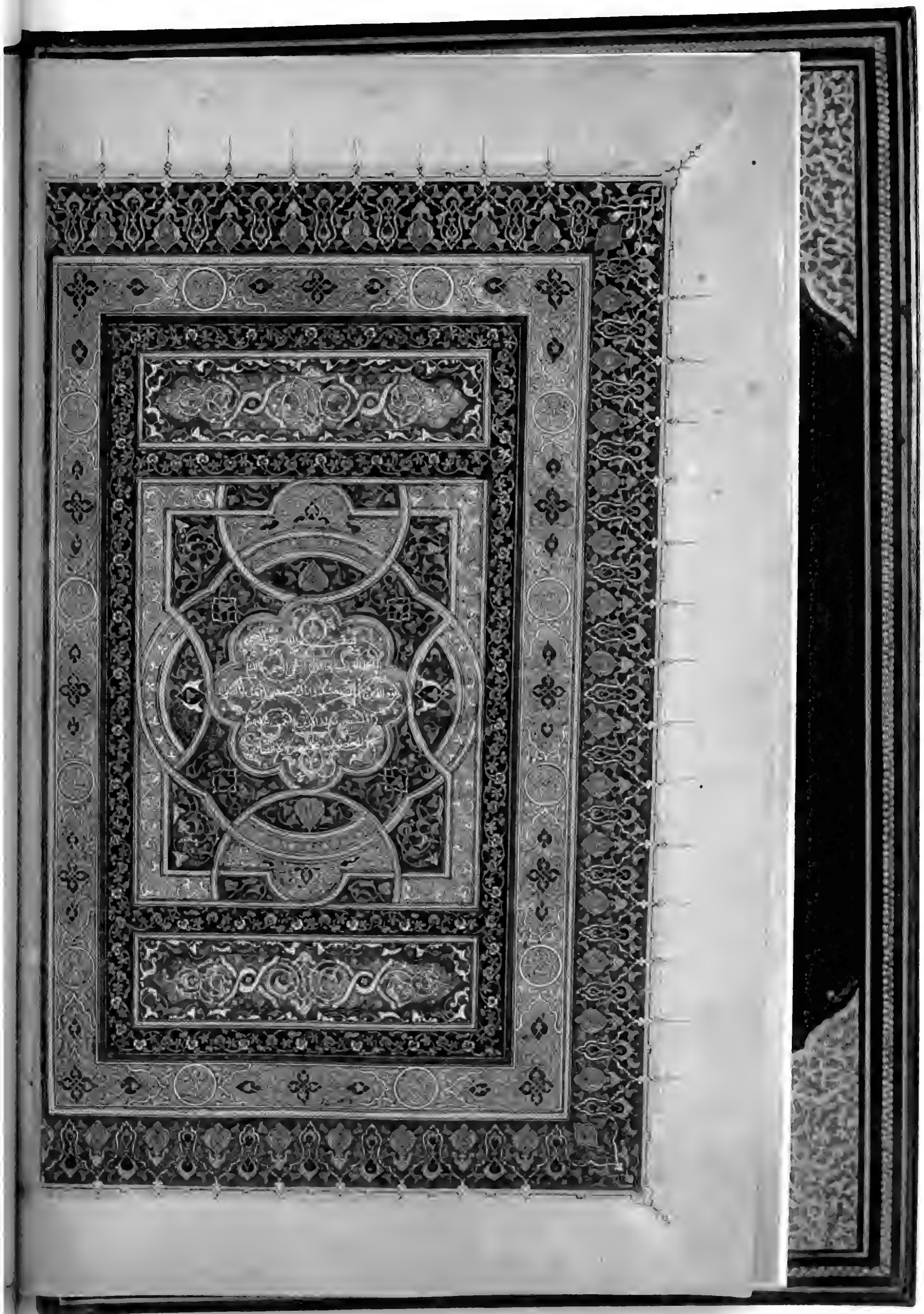
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحسين	عليه السلام	البرقي	السنائي	السنائي
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الاف لامك سن







## 6

## Fragments of a Qur'an

Iran, perhaps 15th century AD

17 folios mounted, 1 folio

unmounted, 30.5 × 21 cm, with

5 lines to the page

*Material* A cream paper, laid, but

with no visible details

*Text area* 14.2 × 9.5 cm*Interlinear spacing* 3 cm*Script* Thulth*Binding* Modern*Accession no.* QUR192 and QUR477

A majority of the folios have been split into two sheets and mounted in an album bound in concertina form; they contain the text of verses 1–2 and 5–11 of *Sūrat al-munāfiqūn* (LXIII) and the whole of *Sūrat al-ṣaff* (LXI). The single loose folio bears verses 2 and 3 of *Sūrat al-ṭalāq* (LXV). The script is an elegant gold *thulth* outlined in black and with black vocalization. Gold rosettes punctuate the verses. It is difficult to suggest a precise date for the manuscript from which this material came, but it is unlikely that it was produced later than the 16th century on the basis of the script.

## 7

## Part 6 of a 30-part Qur'an

Iran, 15th century AD

17 folios, 28.5 × 20.2 cm, with

11 lines to the page

*Material* A deep buff paper, laid,

with 5–6 lines to the centimetre

*Text area* 18.4 × 12.1 cm*Interlinear spacing* 1.3 cm

*Script* The main text in a combination of *muḥaqqaq*, *thulth* and *naskh*, incidentals in *muḥaqqaq* and *Kufic*

*Documentation* Notice of attribution

*Binding* Ottoman, 16th or

17th century

*Accession no.* QUR95

The manuscript opens with an illuminated headpiece in a fine Herati style that suggests a date in the 15th century. The scribe did not sign or date his work, but an inscription, which is probably Indian and is dated 1698, states that the manuscript is 'in the hand of Hajji 'Abd al-Ba(qi)'. It is not clear who was meant by this. A calligrapher called 'Abd al-Baqi Tabrizi is known from examples of his work found in a large album in the Khalili Collection, MS. 725. As the example on folio 24b of this album is dated 1590–91, 'Abd al-Baqi Tabrizi could not have been the scribe of cat. 7, even if he was the person referred to in the note.

The text is written in two blocks of four lines of *naskh* separated by a central band of *thulth* and framed by a line of *muḥaqqaq* at the top and bottom of each page. Verses are punctuated by gold discs with blue dots. There are gold intercolumnar and interlinear rules throughout. Circular devices in the margins indicate groups of five and ten verses. The one surah heading, that of *Sūrat al-mā'idah* (v), is in gold *muḥaqqaq*.

The Ottoman binding is in brown morocco, with central medallions and corner-pieces of gilt leather decorated with floral motifs and cloud bands. The doublures have a simple gold knot at the centre.

أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ  
مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا  
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ  
أَلَمْ يَجِبْ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يُؤْتُوا  
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مِمَّا رَزَقَهُمْ



أَوْجُورِهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

بَسَّكَ أَقْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ تَرَى عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِنْ  
السَّمَاءِ فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا مُوسَى أَكْبَرُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالُوا  
أَرَأَى اللَّهَ جَهَنَّمَةَ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ بِأَعْيُنِهِمْ ثُمَّ  
أَخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ مَعْتَويًا

عَنْ ذَلِكَ وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَى سُلْطَانَنَا

مُتِينًا <sup>وَقُلْنَا</sup> وَرَفَعْنَا فِيهِمُ الْبُيُوتَ وَمِنَافِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا  
لَهُمْ إِذْ خَلَوْا لِلْبَابِ نَحْنُ أُولَئِكَ لَا نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ  
يُدْعُونَ إِلَى الْغَيْبِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمُ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا <sup>فَمَا أَقْصَاهُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ</sup>  
وَكُفِّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْإِنْسَاءَ نَعْرِجُهُمْ

وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَلْ طَبَعَ

لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ  
سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا ۝١٤٠ إِنْ تَسْتَفْهِرُوا أَوْ تَخْشَوْنَ أَوْ تُعْتَزُّوا  
عَرَضٌ ثُمَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِعَفْوٍ قَدِيرًا ۝١٤١ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

يَكْفُرُ وَزِيَالَهُ رُسُلَهُ وَبِرَبِّهِمْ

أَنْ يَقَرُّوا بِلِلَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُوا نَحْنُ بَعْضُ مَنْ  
يَعْبُدُونَ رُبُّهُمْ أَنْ يَحْجِدُوا مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا أُولَئِكَ  
هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا وَأَعْدَاؤُنَا لِلْجَافِرِينَ أَعْدَاؤُنَا  
مُهِينًا ۝١٤٢ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَمْ يُقَرِّفُوا مِنْ

أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ أَفَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ نُفُوتِهِمْ

## Single-volume Qur'an

Shiraz or Tabriz, *circa* 1475–1500

345 folios, 22 × 15 cm, with  
12 lines to the page

*Material* A cream, well-polished  
paper, laid, with 7 lines to the  
centimetre; there are regular chain  
lines 3 cm apart

*Text area* 14.5 × 9.1 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh  
and muḥaqqaq, with incidentals in  
thulth and Kufic

*Binding* Contemporary

*Accession no.* QUR128

*Comparative items* A Qur'an in  
Istanbul, Museum of Turkish &  
Islamic Arts;<sup>1</sup> Mashhad, Astan-i  
Quds Library, Qur'an MS. 137;  
Dublin, Chester Beatty Library,  
MSS 1501–2,<sup>2</sup> and another section  
from the same Qur'an whose  
whereabouts are unrecorded;<sup>3</sup> and  
Chester Beatty Library, MS. 401.<sup>4</sup>

1. Robinson 1979, p. 244, note 7e,  
where the shelfmark of the  
manuscript was not given.

2. Arberry 1967, cat. nos 147–8;  
James 1980, cat. no. 55.

3. Faza'ili 1391, pp. 332–4. The  
colophon from this section in  
reproduced on p. 333.

4. Minorsky & Wilkinson 1958,  
pp. 1–3.

5. MSS 1501–2.

6. Chester Beatty Library, MS. 401.

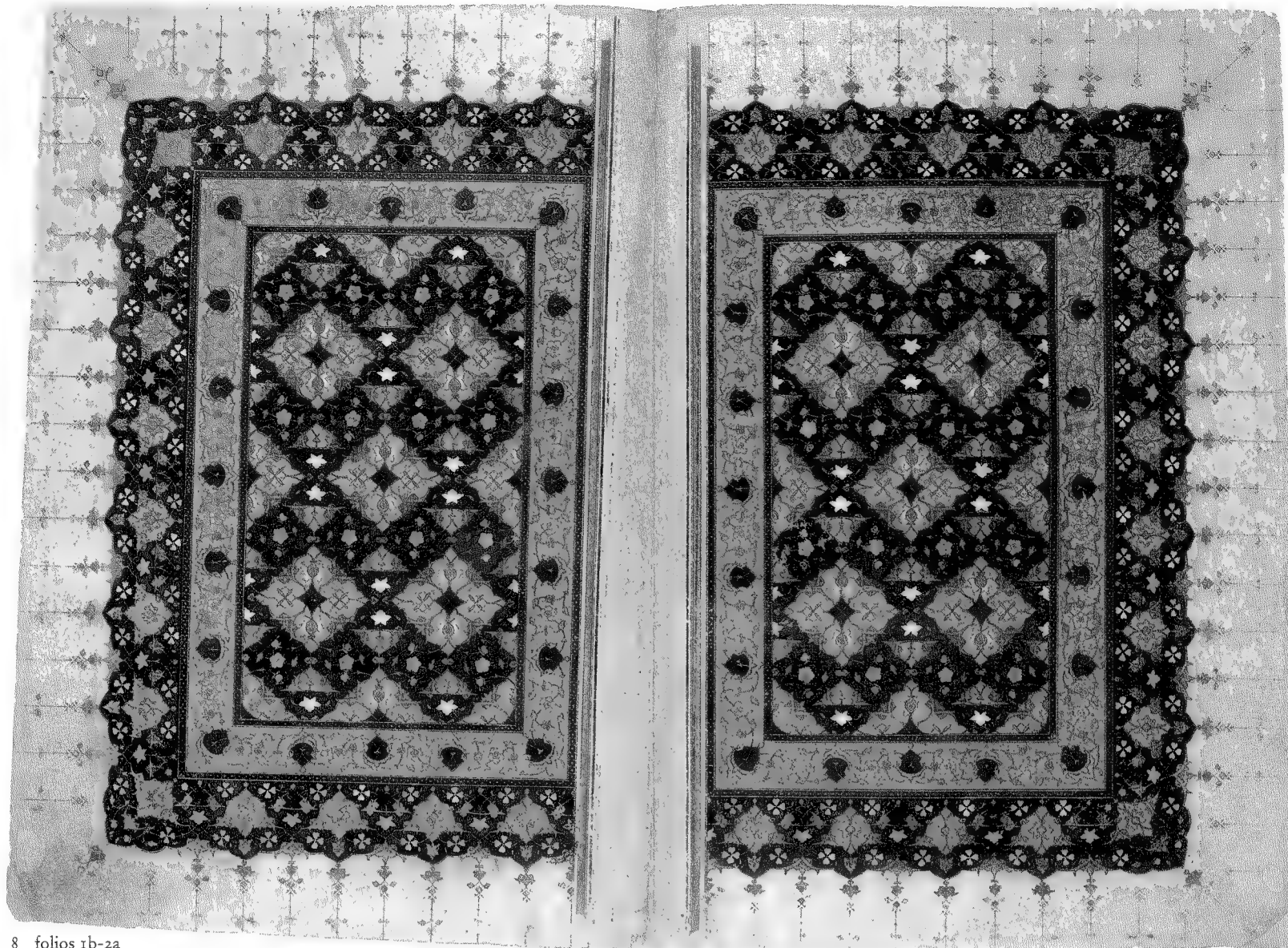
7. Rogers & Ward 1988, p. 77.

Although this fine manuscript lacks any inscriptions, it has all the hallmarks of a royal Aqqoyunlu Qur'an, and it was probably made for a member of the Turkoman court – an official or an amir – during the last quarter of the 15th century, in either Shiraz or Tabriz. Only a handful of Qur'ans made for members of the two Turkoman dynasties are known. There is a Qur'an copied for the Qaraqoyunlu prince Pir Budaq in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in Istanbul, while the Astan-i Quds Library in Mashhad contains a copy made for the Aqqoyunlu sovereign Uzun Hasan in 1471. Parts of another Qur'an made for his son Ya'qub Beg in 1483 are in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin.<sup>5</sup>

Cat. 8 commences with a double-page illumination without inscriptions. The panels are covered with repeating quatrefoils, gold on blue, and these are connected by arabesques to palmettes surrounded by blossoms. Similar devices make up the border. Illumination of this type was taken over by the Ottomans, and Qur'ans in a similar style were produced for the imperial court in Istanbul in the first half of the 16th century.



8 outer back cover

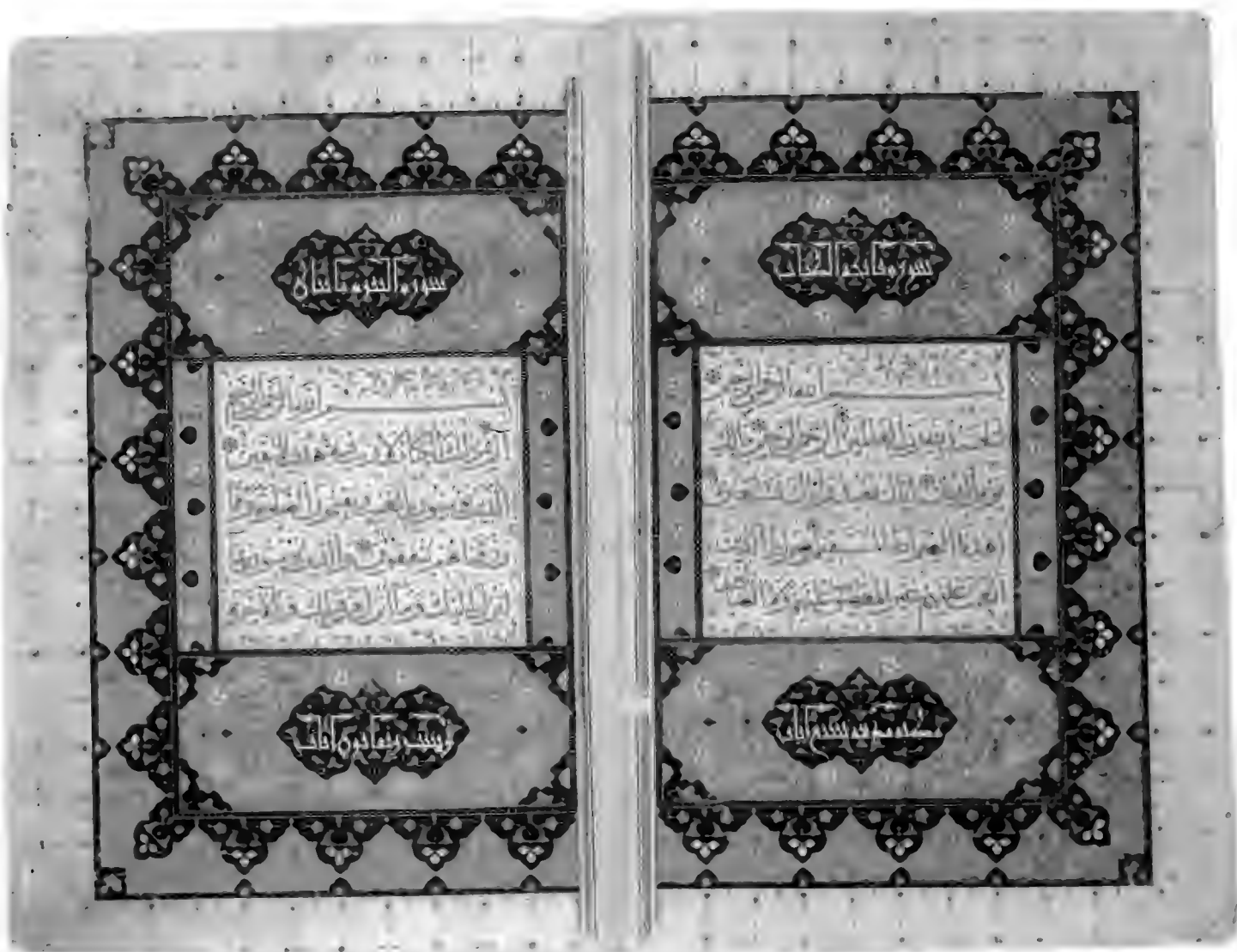


8 folios 1b-2a

The opening pages of Qur'anic text contain five lines of gold *muḥaqqaq* framed by panels of fine illumination. The surah titles are in thin white Kufic. Thereafter the first and twelfth lines of each page are written in gold *muḥaqqaq* with blue vocalization, while the other ten lines of text are in black *naskh*. Verses are separated by gold circlets. Each fifth and tenth verse is indicated by a pointed or circular ornament in the margin.

The contemporary covers have a central panel bearing arabesque quatrefoils which link up in the same manner as those in the frontispiece. The panel was originally brushed with gold, and the blossoms seem to have been painted red. The doublures are of embossed leather filigree. In its delicacy of execution, quality of modelling, and minutely stippled ground, the binding resembles that on a copy of the *Dīvān* of Hidayat made for Sultan Khalil Aqqoyunlu, although the latter is ungilded.<sup>6</sup> Finely modelled and gilded bindings of this type were copied in Ottoman times.<sup>7</sup>

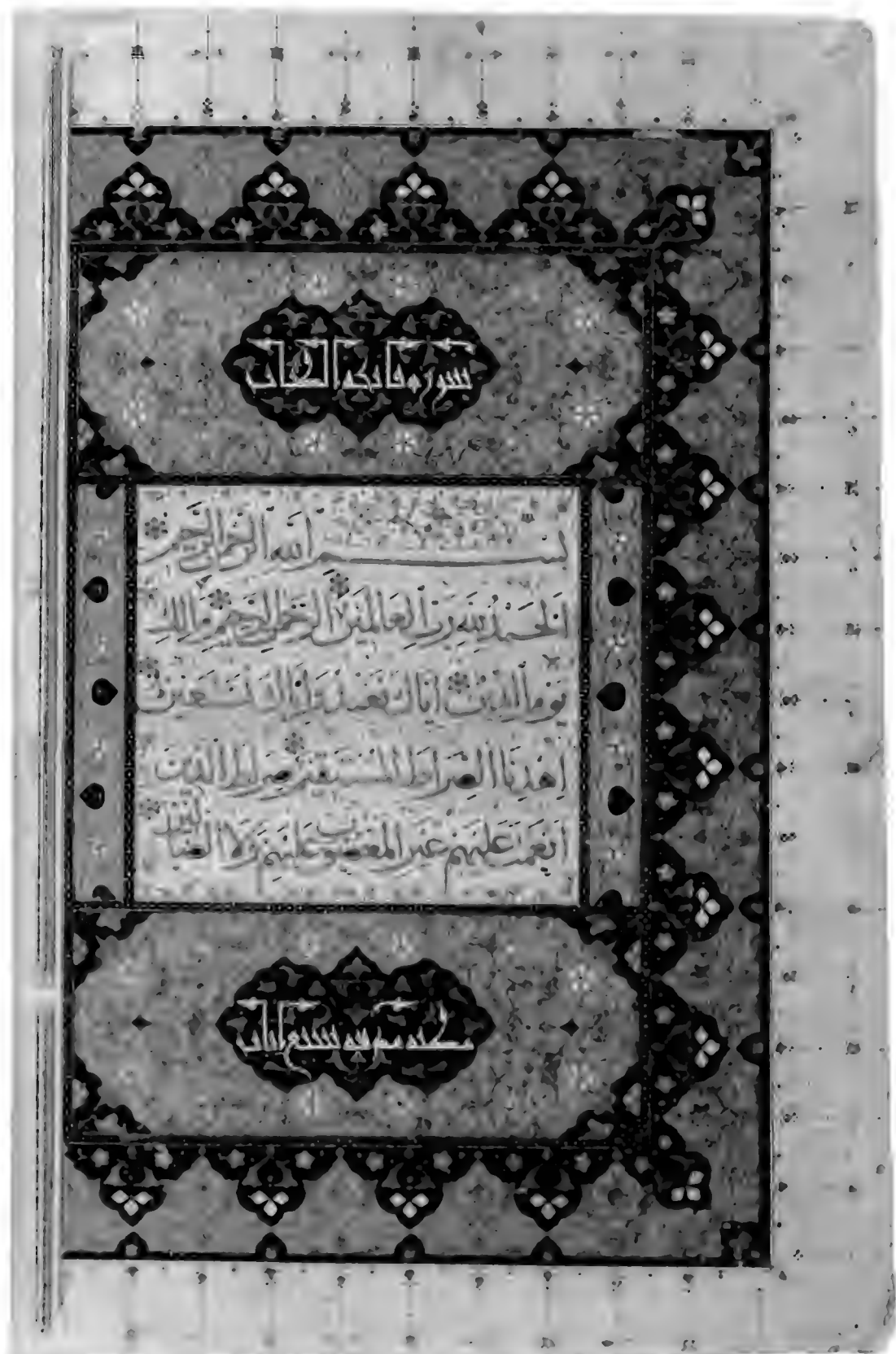




8 folios 2b-3a



8 folios 335b-336a



## 9

## Single-volume Qur'an

Tabriz or Shiraz, circa 1480–1490

515 folios, 48 × 33 cm, with  
9 lines to the page

*Material* A thin, hard, polished  
white paper, laid, with an  
indeterminate number of lines  
to the centimetre

*Text area* 32.1 × 22 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 3.5 cm

*Script* The main text in muḥaqqaq,  
incidentals in thulth

*Binding* Contemporary

*Accession no.* QUR4

*Comparative items* Dublin,

Chester Beatty Library,

MSS 1501–2.<sup>1</sup>

1. Arberry 1967, cat.nos 147–8;  
James 1980, cat.no. 55.

Although this manuscript has some decorative features that suggest a date in the first half of the 15th century, it is more likely to be later, for very similar decoration is found in the surviving parts of a 30-part Qur'an that Zayn al-Din Muhammad Shirazi copied for the Aqqoyunlu ruler Ya'qub Beg in 1483. The binding of cat. 9 is also very close to those of the Qur'an made for Ya'qub Beg and other Turkoman manuscripts. Qur'ans of the Turkoman period, especially large examples such as this, are rare.

The beginning and end of the manuscript are missing, and there are gaps in the text at several other points. The large *muḥaqqaq* hand was written between sets of impressed lines, which can still be seen clearly. Each line of script is written along a central impressed line; another line 2 cm above marks the uppermost limit of the letters *alif*, *lām*, and *kāf*; and a third line 0.6 cm below the central line marks the lower limit of all the sublinear strokes.

The verses are punctuated by petalled medallions. Each fifth and tenth verse is marked by marginal medallions with floral sprays, blue on gold. Surah titles are in gold *thulth* within a cusped cartouche; they are set against wiry black scrolls and gold foliation on a plain ground with a treble-dot motif; and the corners of the panel are filled with blue and decorated with gold floral sprays. The margins are ruled in blue and gold.

The brown morocco covers have a stamped central medallion and pendants decorated with floral motifs. The doublures are of black morocco with central medallions of leather filigree on a blue ground. The decoration on these covers reproduces, in all its major features, that on the Qur'an made for Ya'qub Beg in 1483, although corner-pieces appear on some of the bindings from the Qur'an of Ya'qub Beg. The wiry arabesque scrolls bear lotus blossoms and vegetal palmettes, all of which are finely modelled. The ground is minutely stippled, while the remainder of the cover is left blank. The filigree of the doublure is carefully modelled in places, a characteristic of the doublures on royal Aqqoyunlu manuscripts. The spine and flap are modern.





تَوَلَّى وَسَبَّحْنَهَا الْاَنْفَى الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَرَكُنِي  
وَمَا لِاحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى اِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ  
رَبِّهِ اَعْلَى وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى

مَنْ يَسْئَلُكَ عَنِ الْاَنْفَى فَاسْأَلْ عَنِ عَشْرَةِ اَيْتَانِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالضُّحَى  
وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَى  
وَمَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا  
قَلَى  
وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِنَ الْأُولَى وَلَسَوْفَ  
يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى  
أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَى  
وَوَدَّعَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى  
فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ

وَرَبُّكَ لَا يَهْدِي  
الضَّلَالَةَ

سورة الليل عشر وثلاثون آيات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّى وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ  
وَالْأُنْثَى إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّى فَمَا مَرَّ غَظِيٌّ وَأُنْثَى  
وَصَدَّقَ الْحَسَنُ فَنَسِيْرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى وَأَمَّا مَنْ  
بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَى وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَنَسِيْرُهُ  
لِلْعُسْرَى وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى إِنَّ  
عَلَيْنَا الْهُدَى وَإِنَّ لَنَا الْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَى فَأَنْذَرْتُكُمْ  
نَارًا تَلَظَّى لَا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَ

# Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Mamluks

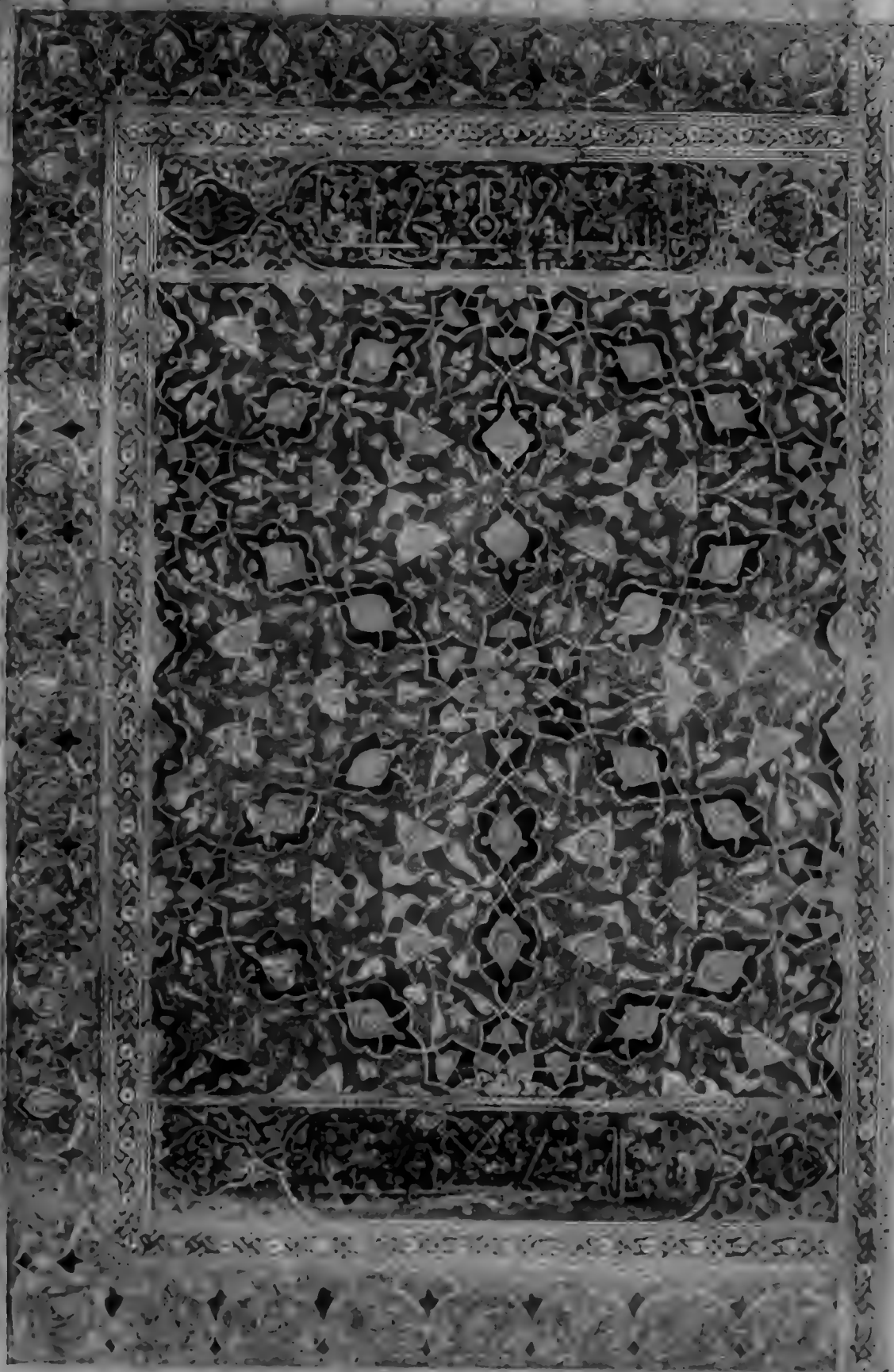
Towards the end of the 14th century the leadership of the Mamluk elite which had ruled Egypt and Syria since 1250 passed to a faction dominated by men of Circassian origin. Not long after the accession of the first Circassian sultan, the relative tranquillity that had marked the empire's foreign relations for three-quarters of a century came to a violent end with the irruption of Timur's army into Syria. Damascus was sacked in 1401, and part of the city's population deported to Samarqand. This disaster was not repeated, and it was not until the Ottoman invasion of Syria in 1516 that Mamluk power was seriously threatened. The Ottoman's military success in that year led to the rapid collapse of Mamluk legitimacy, and their state was soon absorbed by their Turkish foes.

Mamluk Qur'ans from the first two decades of the 15th century continued to be illuminated in the manner associated with Ibrahim al-Amidi. A hybrid formed to a large extent from Iranian and Anatolian elements, it superseded the classical Mamluk style from the 1370s onwards and was used to decorate a series of large Qur'ans. Work in this style ceased soon after the end of the reign of Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (1412–21), and one of the last examples was produced in 1417 by Musa ibn Isma'il al-Kinani for the Sultan himself. From the 1420s Qur'an illumination was executed in a mixture of styles by artists who often had little talent. The main ingredients were much-debased versions of the various types of decoration employed in the 14th century, and Mamluk versions of Timurid illumination, which were often combined indiscriminately in the same manuscript. A revival occurred towards the end of the 15th century, when a number of Turkoman artists from the Aqqoyunlu lands in eastern Anatolia and western Iran appeared in Egypt and Syria and began to produce work far superior to that of local painters. This new competence can be seen in another Qur'an in the Khalili Collection, cat. 16 below, which was produced in Aleppo in 1489, probably by an artist who had emigrated there from western Iran or, at the very least, by one who worked in a Turkoman style.

Although the standard of illumination declined, calligraphy of very high quality continued to be produced, and there was even innovation in the form of a distinctive type of flattened *naskh*, called *naskh faddah*, which appeared in the last 30 years of the Mamluk period. Besides the Qur'ans produced by several outstanding calligraphers of the period, the best known of whom was 'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Sa'igh, many other copies were produced by the Mamluks themselves, for calligraphy was one of the subjects studied as part of their training. It is unusual to find more than one Qur'an copied by the same person, perhaps because Mamluk officials who were not full-time chancery scribes produced an occasional copy to present to the sultan or an important amir. On the other hand, professional scribes produced large numbers of Qur'ans, for the scribe of cat. 13 tells us that he had made no fewer than 58 other copies. This gives an indication of how many 15th-century Mamluk Qurans have perished.

One of the earliest 15th-century Qur'ans in the Khalili Collection, cat. 10 below, is not only one of the finest but also one of the most enigmatic, for we cannot be sure whether it is Mamluk or early Ottoman, as it is illuminated in a provincial rendering of the Timurid style. In either case, the manuscript is of particular interest because it shows that the Timurid style had been adopted well beyond the borders of Iran as early as 1404–5.





## 10

## Single-volume Qur'an

Mamluk or Ottoman, AH807/AD1404-5

259 folios, 32.2 × 24 cm, with

15 lines to the page

*Material* A very thin paper, laid, with an indeterminate number of lines to the centimetre; double and triple chain lines are visible

*Text area* 24.8 × 17.6 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1.5 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh, incidentals in thulth and Kufic

*Scribe and illuminator* Ibrahim ibn Murad al-Hafiz

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Modern

*Accession no.* QUR171

*Comparative item* Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, MS. 5282.<sup>1</sup>

1. James 1981, cat.no. 14;

Lentz & Lowry 1989, cat.no. 101.

2. See cat. 21 below, for example.

3. Chester Beatty Library, MS. 5282.

4. James 1988, chapter 5.

5. For example, Sotheby's 1975, lot no. 202, a Qur'an copied for Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (reg 1444-6, 1451-81).

The combination of Mamluk, Timurid and perhaps Ottoman features in the layout and illumination of this manuscript make a precise determination of provenance difficult. Ottoman painters had not yet developed a distinctive style of their own by this time, and hybrid varieties of illumination are common in Ottoman Qur'ans throughout the first half of the 15th century.<sup>2</sup> Mamluk illumination, on the other hand, was at the beginning of a period of decline during which foreign elements, particularly those from Timurid Iran, were adopted without reservation or discrimination. However, the foreign elements in Mamluk illumination were usually details, whereas in this manuscript the design of the frontispiece, only half of which survives, is of Timurid derivation and may be compared to a classic piece of Timurid illumination, the frontispiece to a copy of the *Jāmi' al-uṣūl* of Ibn al-Athir dated 1435-6.<sup>3</sup> Although the two are by no means identical, the frontispiece of cat. 10 was clearly inspired by the type of Herati work seen in the Ibn al-Athir manuscript.

While the design of the frontispiece is more Timurid than Mamluk, the illumination around the first two pages of text is of a mixed Mamluk-Timurid type. The chains of coloured flowers on a black ground that are found in the borders began to appear in Mamluk illumination of the late 14th century and also occurred in Timurid ornament; the 'exotic' Kufic inscriptions on folios 1b-2a are typical of Timurid work; and the detailed arabesques and palmettes in green, red and gold, together with the black shield shapes finely outlined in white, first appeared in Egyptian Mamluk manuscripts illuminated by Ibrahim al-Amidi in the 1370s.<sup>4</sup> On this evidence, it would seem that the illuminator of cat. 10 followed the general trend in Mamluk Qur'an decoration in the third quarter of the 14th century, away from the 'classical' Mamluk style towards a polychrome floral style, which disappeared as the 15th century progressed.

Other features also support a Mamluk provenance for the manuscript: the marginal verse-markers and the plain, bold gold *thulth* of the surah headings; the placing of the colophon within a gold frame; and the type of paper used. If the manuscript is indeed Mamluk, it is one of the earliest examples of Timurid influence in manuscripts produced in Egypt and Syria. The alternative, Ottoman, provenance for the manuscript is suggested by the large, bold *naskh* punctuated by verse-markers in the form of rosettes and by some of the details of the decoration, such as the thin, spidery, 'exotic' Kufic and the crimson and green of the colour scheme. All of these features are found in Ottoman Qur'ans of the 15th century.<sup>5</sup>

The scribe tells us in the colophon that he was also the illuminator. This is a rare occurrence, for we have few names of either Ottoman or Mamluk illuminators from the early 15th century.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

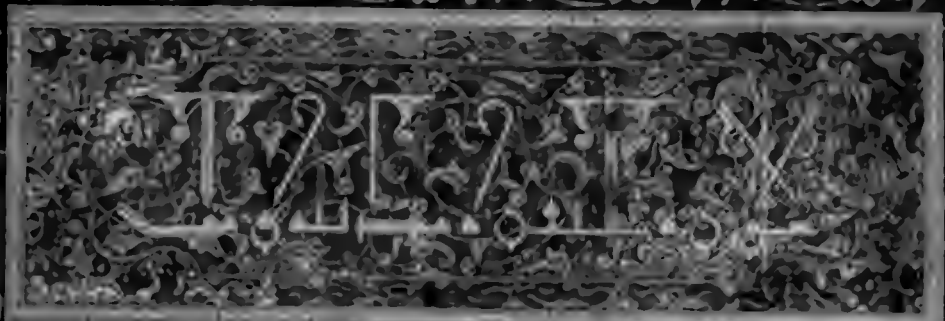
## سورة الحديد كبريت قشع وستون آية

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

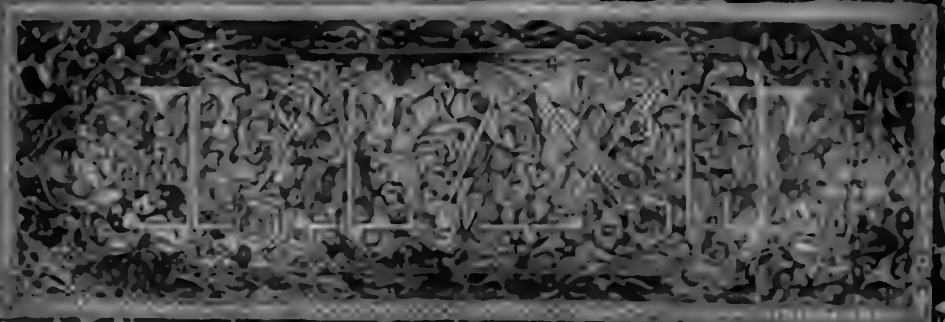
الْم أَحْيَبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ  
وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ  
الْكَاذِبِينَ ❀ أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَسْبِقُونَا  
سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ❀ مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ أَجَلَ اللَّهُ  
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ❀ وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ❀ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ  
عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ❀  
وَوَضَّيْنَا لِلنَّاسِ يُولَدِيَهُمْ حُسْنًا وَأَنْ جَاهِدَاكَ لِشِرْكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ  
لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ❀  
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ ❀  
وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَا أُوذِيَ فِي اللَّهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ







بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكَ مَا تَزِيدُ ۚ  
وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُنْقِضُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ  
وَالَّذِي يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ  
وَالَّذِي يَخْتَارُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ  
وَالَّذِي يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ



الحمد لله

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝  
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝ يَا كَافُورُ يَا مُنْتَعِبُ ۝  
مُحَمَّدًا الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ  
عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝

الحمد لله

## II

## Volume 4 of a 10-volume Qur'an

Yemen, *circa* AD 1450–1500

38 folios, 26 × 20.4 cm, with

11 lines to the page

*Material* A coarse, dark cream

wove paper

*Text area* 17.5 × 14 cm*Interlinear spacing* 1.6 cm*Script* The main text in muḥaqqaq,

incidentals in thulth

*Binding* Contemporary*Accession no.* QUR525

1. British Library, OR.MS.2348. See

J. Gutmann, *Hebrew Manuscript**Painting*, London, 1979, pl.2.

Gutmann was unable to find a

single contemporary Yemeni

Qur'an with which to compare the

Pentateuch manuscript.

2. Compare the illumination on

folios 2b, 14b, 23a and 31a with

those published in *Maṣāḥif Ṣan'ā'*,

the catalogue of an exhibition held

at the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,

Kuwait in 1985.

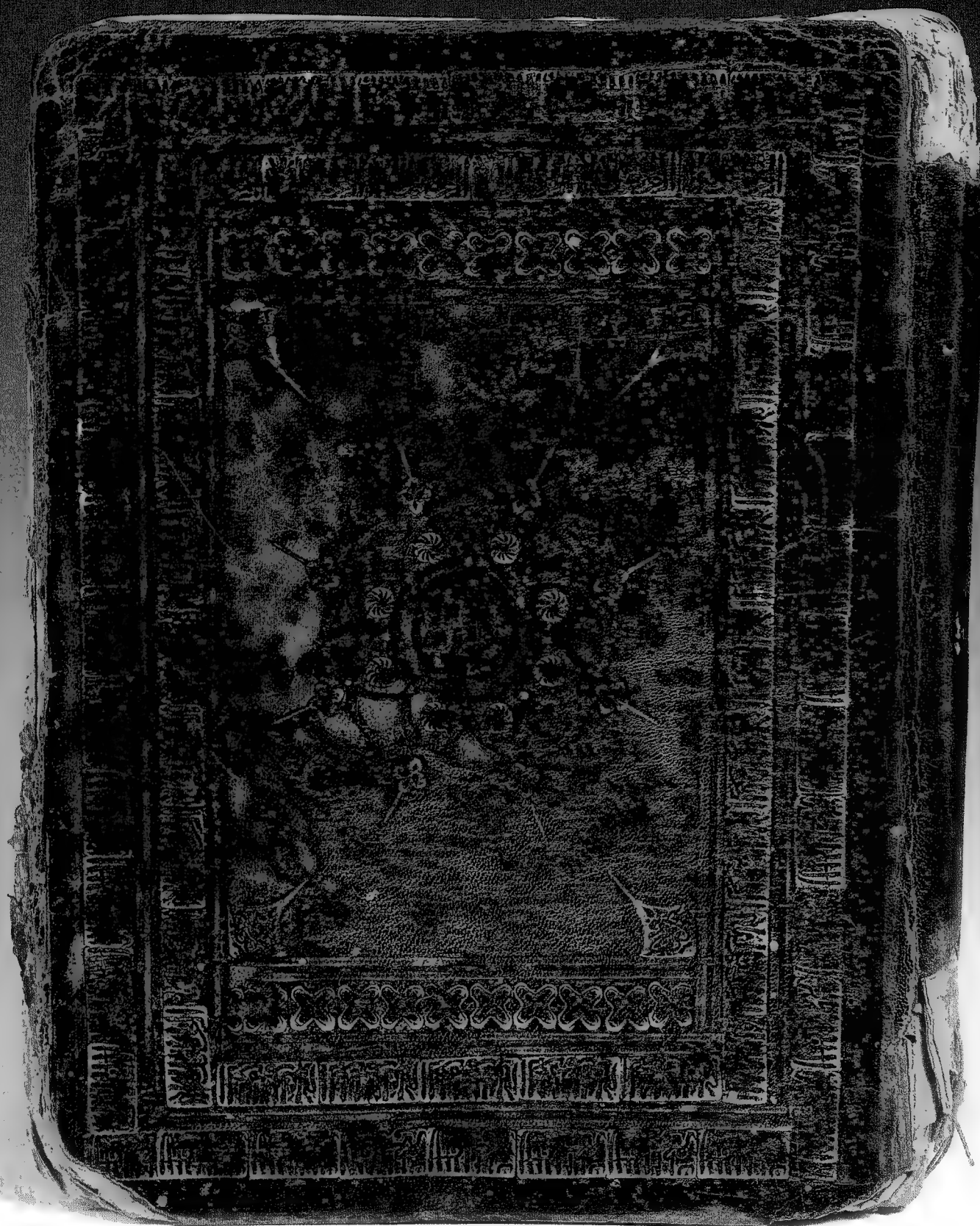
3. Volume II, cat.17.

This is a rare example of a Qur'anic manuscript that can be attributed to Yemen in the 15th century. Thousands of Qur'an fragments, many presumably of Yemeni provenance, were discovered in the roof of the Great Mosque of San'a' at the beginning of the 1970s, and this has given us a vivid picture of Qur'an production in the region in the early Middle Ages. By contrast, very little material from the later Middle Ages have been documented, although many are reputedly preserved in mosque libraries in Yemen.

The dating of this volume is assisted by the presence on folio 37b of a note which records the death of a woman in Dhu'l-Qa'dah AH 953/December AD 1546 or January AD 1547, but an attribution to the previous century can be made on the basis of a comparison with a Hebrew Pentateuch in London whose Arabic colophon is dated AH 874/AD 1469.<sup>1</sup> Both manuscripts are decorated in a similar, archaic manner, some of whose elements can be traced back to the Qur'an fragments of the Abbasid period found in the Great Mosque of San'a'.<sup>2</sup> No gold was employed in the decoration, which is mostly confined to primary colours. The script is an interesting form of *muḥaqqaq* which incorporates unorthodox features such as an extension stroke in final *kāf*; the same feature occurs in the Hebrew Pentateuch. In some ways, the script is reminiscent of that seen in a 13th-century Indian Qur'an in the Khalili Collection.<sup>3</sup> Surah titles are given in a type of *thulth* with archaic elements: *fathah* and *kasrah*, for example, are set horizontally rather than at an angle of 45 degrees. The verses are normally punctuated by yellow rosettes with red centres. Marginal medallions mark the main divisions of the text into *ḥizb*, *juz'* and *rub'*. The text finishes on folio 36b with a row of rosettes followed by the customary evocation, *Ṣaddaqa'llāh al-'azīm wa ballagha rasūluhu'l-karīm* ('God the Mighty has spoken truly, and His noble Prophet has transmitted it'), to which other religious maxims have been appended. The last few pages bear roughly written notes and invocations, which include the record dated AH 953.

The front cover and the first folio of text are missing. The back cover bears a central rosette with stamped decoration. There is a line of knots above and below and two surrounding borders of stamped inscriptions. The stamp used for the inner border contains *Sūrat al-wāqī'ah* (LVI), verse 79, while that used for the inner border reads *al-'izz al-muqīm al-dā'im* ('lasting and perpetual glory'). The doublures are decorated with a pattern of interlace which is now worn and faded.





11 outer back cover

الذللك ايات الكتاب المبين اذا انزلناه فقرأنا من الاعلى  
تعالى ونزلنا من بعدك احسن القصر ما اوحيانا  
اليك هلال القرون وان كنت لمر الغافل من اذ قال  
يوسف لاسه ياتني في ترائيت احد عشر كوكبا  
والقمر والقمر اثنى عشر نجما جدت لك قال انا لاني  
رؤياك على اخوتك فكري وانك كبر الا انك  
الانسان على ميزانك وكذا انك بختك كوك  
ويجاءك من اهل الاخوان وقتك فخذك وكما  
العبور كما انما علا انك من اول الترهيب ايتي  
نزلت على خديك كبرك كارك في يومك والاف  
ادام اليك ما ياتي في الايام واليوم في خوه ايتي





## Qur'an fragment

Cairo, AH 840/AD 1436

32 folios, 30.2 × 22 cm, with  
9 lines to the page

*Material* An off-white paper, laid,  
with an indeterminate number of  
lines to the centimetre; rib shadows  
and double and triple sagging chain  
lines are visible

*Text area* 21 × 15 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1.5 cm

*Script* A combination of a larger  
indeterminate script and a small  
naskh hand

*Scribe* 'Abdallah ibn akh

al-Shaykh Nasrallah

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Modern

*Accession no.* QUR 137

*Comparative items* Three Qur'an  
sections in the National Library in  
Cairo are probably from the same  
Qur'an,<sup>1</sup> as is Chicago, Oriental  
Institute, MS. A 12030a.<sup>2</sup>

1. The three sections in this library  
are recorded as MS. 19,500–626 in  
the old khedival catalogue; see  
*Fihrist* 1309.

2. Abbott 1939, cat.no. 21 and  
pl.xxv.

3. Ibn Taghribirdi–Popper, vi,  
pp. 33–8.

These folios contain portions of surahs VI, VII, XI, XII, XIII, XV and XVI and probably came from the same Qur'an as three sections now in the National Library in Cairo which bear the same name and date. A further 177 folios from what appears to be the same Qur'an are in the Oriental Institute, Chicago. These contain three colophons dated AH 839/AD 1435 and *waqf* notices dated AH 840/AD 1436. The calligrapher named as the scribe of the manuscript in all three instances was a nephew (*ibn akh*) of Shaykh Nasrallah, a Mamluk court official and Sufi. According to Ibn Taghribirdi, Shaykh Nasrallah was a resident of Cairo, but the historian also describes him as an *'ajamī*, which indicates that he was Persian in origin.<sup>3</sup>

The first, fifth and ninth lines of each page are written in a larger hand that has elements of both *muḥaqqaq* and *thulth*, and the remainder is in *naskh*. Large gold discs separate the verses. Each fifth



12 folio 15a (detail)

and tenth verse is marked in the margin by a medallion. There is one page with illumination of an average 15th-century Mamluk type. It is unusual to find Mamluk Qur'ans divided into large and small scripts, but this is undoubtedly the provenance of the manuscript. The colophon, written in an interesting chancery hand resembling *dīwānī*, records that the manuscript was copied in Cairo (*ma'mūrat Miṣr al-maḥrūsah*).

Under the colophon on folio 15a there is the impression of a fine seal of a lozenge shape usually associated with the Ottomans. The inscription on the seal is an invocation of Solomon and the Prophets.

مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّا تَحْصِرُونَ هُنَّ يَأْتِيَنَّ

مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يَأْتُنَّ النَّاسُ  
وَفِيهِ يَعْصِرُونَ وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ لِيُؤْتِيَنِي  
بِهِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ أَرْجِعْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ

فَاسْأَلْهُ مَا بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ الَّالِيَةِ قَطْعًا أَمْ يَكُنَّ

إِنَّ رَأَيْتِي بِكَ كَذِبًا عَلَيَّ

قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكَ فَذَرَاؤُتِي يَوْسُفَ

عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قُلُوبًا حَاشَ اللَّهُ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ

مِنْ شَيْءٍ قَالَتْ أَمْرَاتُ الْعَزِيزِ الْأَزْهَرِ حَصْحَصَ

## 13

## Single-volume Qur'an

Egypt, AH 844/AD 1440

414 folios, 40 × 29.5 cm, with  
11 lines to the page

*Material* A polished cream paper,  
laid, with an indeterminate number  
of lines to the centimetre; rib  
shadows and triple chain lines  
are visible

*Text area* 29 × 18.5 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 2.5 cm

*Script* The main text in muḥaqqaq,  
incidentals in thulth

*Scribe* 'Abdallah Yusuf ibn  
Baha-yi (*sic*) al-Din al-Shafi'i  
al-Misri

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Ottoman, 16th century

*Accession no.* QUR241

The scribe of this manuscript tells us that he has already copied 58 Qur'ans, but, to our knowledge, not one of these has survived. The information is important, for few Mamluk scribes can be associated with more than one Qur'an, and this has given rise to various explanations. Although Egypt was spared the ravages of war and invasion after the collapse of the Fatimid caliphate in 1171, the colophon of this Qur'an indicates that many manuscripts perished for other reasons – whether fire, flood or neglect.

The manuscript begins with a lobed medallion which contains *Sūrat al-wāqī'ah* (LVI), verses 77–80, and ends with another containing *Sūrat al-tatfīf* (LXXXIII), verses 25–6. The frontispiece on folios 1b–2a consists of a central square decorated with an infinite pattern of gold peonies on a blue or red-gold ground. It is framed above and below by panels which contain *Sūrat al-shu'arā'* (XXVI), verses 192–5. On folios 2b–3a five lines of text are set in square panels with the words written in cloud cartouches over a ground hatched in red. The panels above and below bear the surah titles and verse counts. The design of the panels, together with the marginal decoration, is in the same style as that of the previous pages. The finispiece on folios 411b–412a is virtually identical to the frontispiece, the main exception being that the inscription in the panels above and below the main field is *Sūrat al-an'ām* (VI), verse 115.

Surah headings are in white *thulth*. Each tenth verse is indicated in the margin by the word *'ashar* ('ten'), and divisions of the text such as thirtieths and sixtieths are indicated by gold inscriptions. Reading instructions (*qirā'āt*) are marked in red throughout. According to a note at the end of the manuscript, the version is that of Basrah according to Abu 'Amr (*d* 770). Variant *qirā'āt* are given in the margins in red and blue, and the commentary of al-Wahidi, the *Tafsīr al-gharīb*, is written at the bottom of each page. The note also mentions an index (*fihrist*) and a table of letters for divining the future (*qur'ah li'l-fāl*).

Two folios at the very end of the manuscript (folios 413b–414a) contain a mini-compendium of Qur'anic critical apparatus which consists of the following: a criticism of those scribes who make unauthorized changes to the Qur'anic text; the names of the readers who provided the seven authorized variants of the Qur'an; an explanation of the notation system used for the readings recommended by Abu 'Amr; an explanation of the notation system used for correct pronunciation; the value of the letters of the alphabet for divination purposes; and the number of surahs, verses, letters etc. in the Qur'an. This text is followed by the colophon.

The binding is later. It has brown morocco covers with sunk central medallions and corner-pieces. The doublures are modern.





سورة البقرة مائة واثني عشر آية

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ  
الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا  
رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ  
إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

سورة البقرة مائة واثني عشر آية

سورة فاتحة الكتاب

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ  
اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ  
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

سبع مائة مائة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
الحمد لله رب العالمين  
الرحمن الرحيم  
ملك يوم الدين  
إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين  
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم  
صراط الذين أنعمت  
عليهم غير المغضوب  
عليهم ولا الضالين

## Part 22 of a 30-part Qur'an

Mamluk, circa 1453–1461

20 folios, 27.6 × 19 cm, with  
9 lines to the page

*Material* A coated and highly  
polished white paper, laid, with no  
visible details; there are double and  
triple sagging chain lines and rib  
shadows

*Text area* 20 × 13 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 2.3 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in thulth

*Patron* Probably Sultan Inal

*Documentation* An endowment  
notice

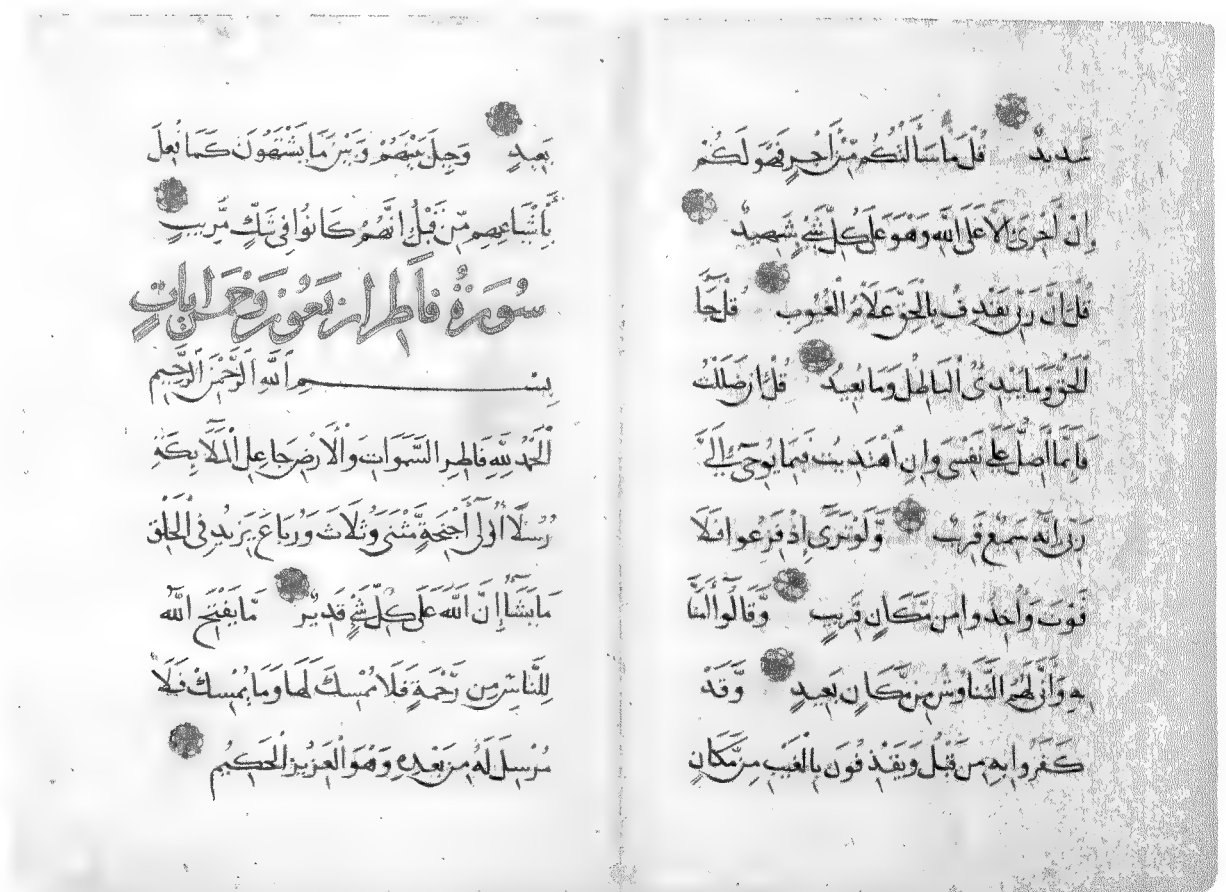
*Binding* Contemporary

*Accession no.* QUR298

1. Al-Maqrizi, II, p. 40.

The endowment notice on folio 1a of this Qur'an states that the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Inal (reg 1453–61) donated it in a completed state to his *khānaqāh* outside the Bab al-Nasr in Cairo. The *khānaqāh* was part of the complex of religious buildings erected by Inal at various stages during his long career, and it still stands in the Northern Cemetery of the city, near the tomb of Qansawh Abu Sa'id.<sup>1</sup>

On folio 1a the section number has been written in a panel above a large medallion made up of interlocking trefoils; the endowment



14 folios 12b–13a

notice has been added in the margin at a later stage. Surah headings are in gold thulth on a plain ground, and verses are separated by gold rosettes with red and blue dots. The brown morocco covers have large central medallions filled with stamps and an outer border composed of loose s-links.

وقد  
مولانا الحسن الملقب بالشيخ العبد  
ابن النضر اسما خلد للشيخ الملقب بالشيخ  
الجنة في الجهر من هذه الوعد  
وما قبله وما بعد من هذه  
الناس كتاب الله تعالى شفيع  
قراءة ونسخا على يد  
صحة هذا وجعل نفرا في  
التي انشأها ما هو اوضح  
تجاه قبة النضر قبل الله تعالى  
عنده حدس في ان ذلك

[illegible]

15

## Single folio

Mamluk, circa AD 1430–1460

41 × 32 cm, with

12 lines to the page

*Material* A polished cream paper, laid, with an indeterminate number of lines to the centimetre

*Text area* 29.5 × 21.5 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 2.4 cm

*Script* The main text in muḥaqqaq, incidentals in thulth

*Accession no.* QUR605

The text runs from *Sūrat al-qalam* (LXVIII), verse 35, to *Sūrat al-ḥāqqah* (LXIX), verse 19, and is written in black. The heading of *Sūrat al-ḥāqqah* is written in gold *thulth*, with the ‘eyes’ of the letters filled in in red. The heading is set in an illuminated panel, which has a blue ground decorated with gold arabesques with red highlights and is surrounded by a wide gold frame. The main field of the panel has cusped ends, and the area beyond these has a red ground. Each verse is punctuated with a gold rosette. An ornament in the margin of the verso marks the end of a quarter of a *juz*’ (thirtieth).





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَاقَّةُ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ وَمَا أَزَلُ الْمَاحِقَةُ لَئِنْ شُؤِرُوا عَادُوا الْقَارِعَةَ فَمَا مَوْءُودُ  
فَأَهْلُكُمْ أَلِ الطَّاعِيَةِ وَأَمَّا عَادُوا فَاهْلُكُمْ أَوْبَرُ نَحْضِ صَرْضِ عَاتِيَةِ سُخْرِيهَا  
عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ أَوْ ثَمَانِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا ضَرْعًا كَانَهُمْ عِجْلًا  
تَخِخَاوَةً فَهِيَ تَمُرُّ لَمْ يُنْزِقْ مِنْهَا سَائِقَةً وَتُفِيقُهَا مِزْقَةً وَمُتَفِكَاتُ  
بِالْخَاطِئَةِ فَعُوضًا زِنْوَانِهِمْ فَخَذَهُمْ لَخَذَةً زَانِيَةً إِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَى الْمَلْحَمَةُ  
فِي الْجَانَةِ لَنُخَالِطَهَا لَكُمُ تَذَكُّرًا وَتَوَعُّبًا أَذْرَافُ عِيدَةٍ فَإِذَا نَفَخَ فِي الصُّورِ  
نَفْخَةً وَاحِدَةً وَجُمِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَيَوْمَئِذٍ  
وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ وَانْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَهِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاهٍ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَى  
أَنْجَابِهِمْ أُتْبِلَتْ عَشْرِينَ نَجْمًا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَانِيَةَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَعْزُضُونَ  
تَخْفِيفًا مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةً فَمَا مَرَأَتْ كَيْبَهُ يَمِينُهُ فَيَقُولُ هَؤُلَاءِ مُرَاوِدُكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا



## 16

## Single-volume Qur'an

Aleppo, AH895/AD 1489

303 folios, 21.5 × 15.5 cm, with

15 lines to the page

*Material* A highly polished buff paper which is both wove and laid; the number of laid lines is indeterminate

*Text area* 14.7 × 10 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh and muhaqqaq, incidentals in thulth

*Scribe* Ahmad ibn Yahya

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Ottoman, 16th century

*Accession no.* QUR213

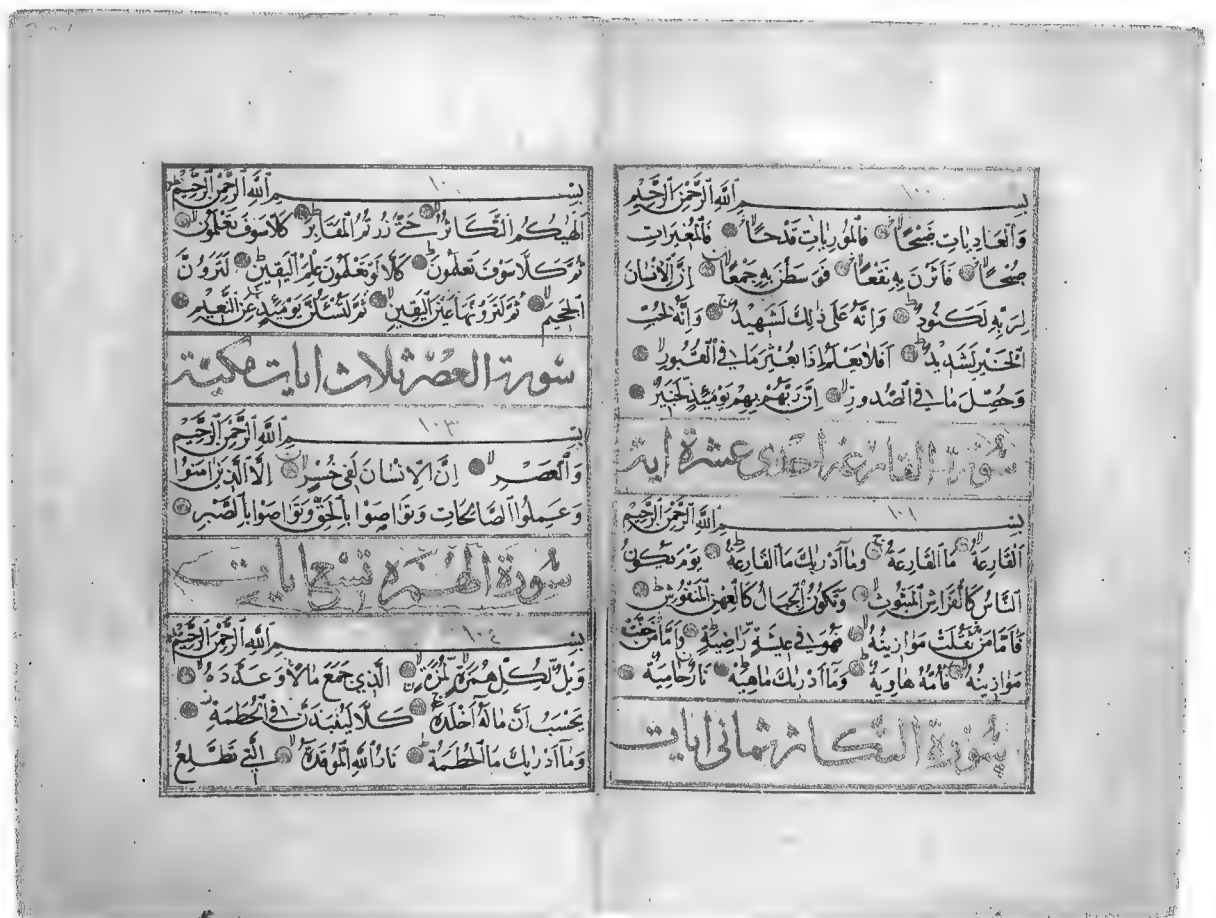
*Comparative item* Dublin, Chester

Beatty Library, MS. 1469

1. See Atıl 1981, p. 253.

According to the colophon, which was written in *riqā'* within a panel on the final page, this manuscript was produced in Aleppo, but its appearance suggests that it was made in Iran under the Timurid or Turkoman dynasties. Given its late 15th-century date, it seems probable that the scribe, who may also have been the illuminator, was one of the Turkoman artists who went to work for the Mamluks at this time.<sup>1</sup>

On the opening pages (folios 1b–2a) square panels contain the text, which is in cloud cartouches against a ground hatched in dark red. The panels of text are surrounded by rich illumination on a milky-blue



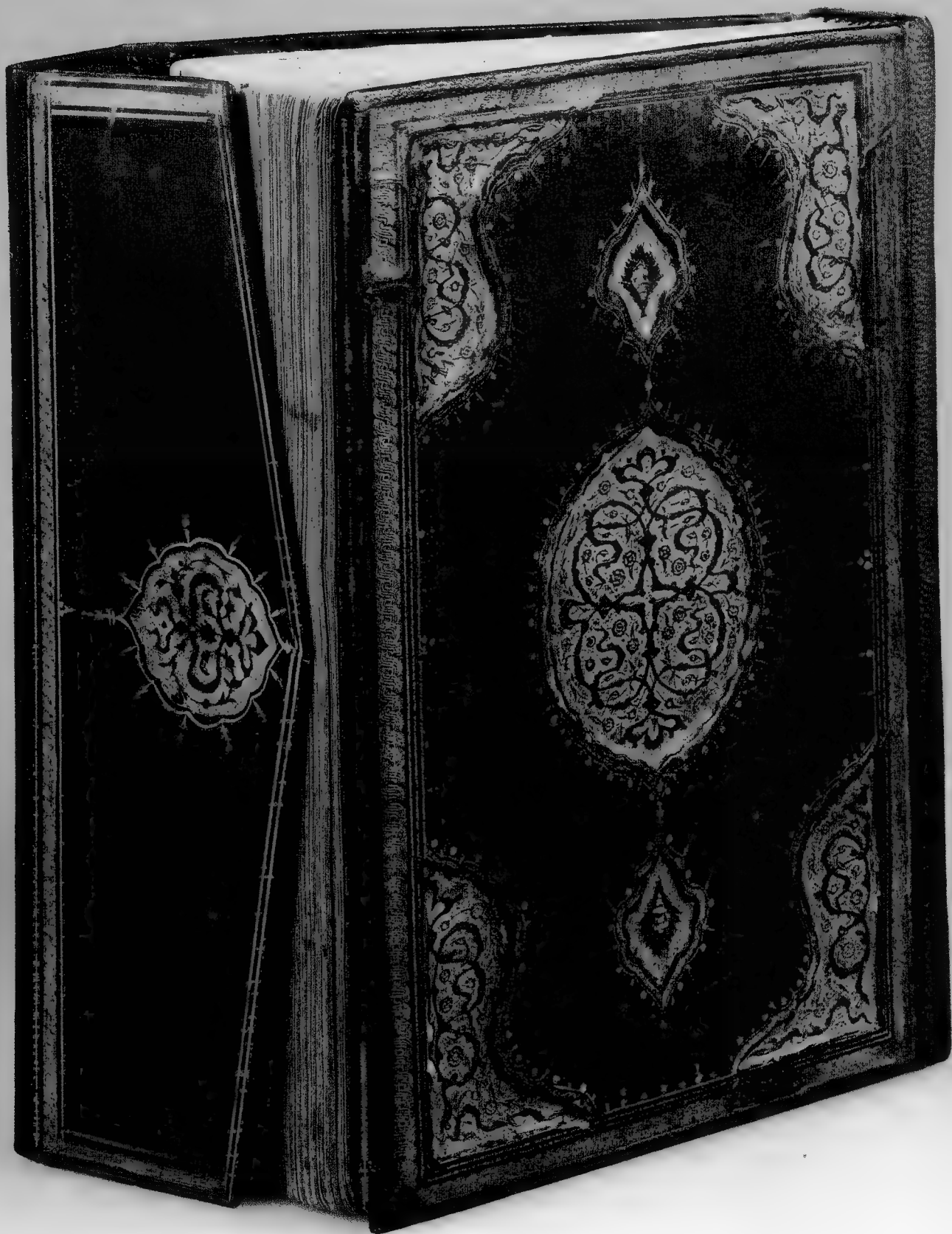
16 folios 300b–301a

ground. Finely drawn gold leaves form palmettes, and there are pink lotus blossoms and orange, pink and green flowers. Decorative panels above and below the text have borders of flower scrolls within bright green cartouches. At their centres are oval medallions in gold bearing the titles and verse counts of the first two surahs. The surah headings are in gold *thulth* and are set in plain panels. Whenever a new *juz'* begins, the line of text is enlarged and written in *muhaqqaq*. Gold circlets punctuate the verses, and each page of text is framed with blue and gold rules. Reading notations are in red.

The brown morocco covers have sunk central medallions and corner-pieces. These are painted in gold with cloud and floral scrolls.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ



# The First Qur'ans from Constantinople

By 1400 the Ottomans had crossed the Bosphorus and established their capital at Edirne, on European soil. This placed them in a position to threaten Constantinople from both the east and the west, and in 1453 the army of Sultan Mehmed II captured the imperial city after a protracted siege. This momentous event was followed by a period of artistic experimentation and assimilation during which specifically Ottoman forms emerged in both architecture and the visual arts. Relatively few Qur'ans survive from the reign of Mehmed II (1451–81), and even fewer of these can be associated with named patrons. Only one, for example, bears the name of the Conqueror himself.<sup>1</sup> A Qur'an in the Khalili Collection which is datable to *circa* 1464 is therefore of particular significance. This manuscript, cat. 21 below, was made for Mercan Ağa, an important official in the years immediately following the capture of Constantinople.

The illumination on manuscripts produced in the 1450s and 1460s is in a variety of hybrid styles, but from the 1470s a more homogeneous style developed under Timurid and Turkoman influence. The later evolution of this style can be followed more clearly, for many more elaborately decorated Qur'ans survive from the reign of Mehmed's son, Bayezid II (1481–1512). Three examples illuminated in this style were written by Şeyh Hamdullah and are dated 1494, 1499 and 1503–4.<sup>2</sup> This artist, who lived until 1520, was the dominant figure in the history of Ottoman calligraphy in this period. Hamdullah had been the calligraphy master of Prince Bayezid while he was governor of Amasya, and he accompanied his pupil to Istanbul upon his accession. Although Şeyh Hamdullah is said to have practised all of the classic hands, he is best known for his *naskh* and *thulth*, both of which are clearly recognizable and were derived from those of Yaqut al-Musta'simi. Hamdullah's version of *naskh* was to become the standard Qur'anic hand of the later Ottoman period.

The archives of Istanbul, which contain material going back to the first years of the city's role as the Ottoman capital, provide the first sequence of documents relating to court artists to survive from the Islamic world. They record the names of these artists and in some cases give their countries of origin and biographical information. However, few works of art of the period were signed, so that we are seldom able to identify them as the products of the artists named in the documents. An exception is a group of three Qur'ans that were copied by a scribe called Fazlullah ibn Velî, who was presented with a gift of money by the sultan in 1505.<sup>3</sup> Two of these manuscripts are in the Topkapı Palace Library in Istanbul, while the third is in the Khalili Collection and appears as cat. 22 below.

1. Sotheby's 1975, lot no. 202; and Christie's 1989, lot no. 339.

2. Istanbul 1983, cat. no. 12, E. 14 and E. 16.

3. Atıl 1987, pp. 293.



## 17

## Single-volume Qur'an

Iran or Turkey, circa 1450–1500

491 folios, diameter, 4 cm, with

14 lines to the page

*Material* A fine, thin white paper, laid, with an indeterminate number of lines to the centimetre*Text area* Diameter 2.6 cm*Interlinear spacing* 0.2 cm*Script* Naskh*Binding* 15th or 16th century*Accession no.* QUR371

This minutely written '*sancak* Qur'an' was made to be placed into a case and hung on a military banner. There is a date on the final page which appears to end with *thamānmi'ah* ('eight hundred'), which would mean that the manuscript dates from the 15th century. The octagonal covers are decorated with quatrefoil palmettes in black on gold.



\*17 folios 235b–236a

## 18

## Single-volume Qur'an

Iran or Turkey, circa 1450–1500

374 folios, 24.2 × 16.5 cm, with

13 lines to the page

*Material* A well-polished, thin, hard cream paper, laid, with an indeterminate number of lines to the centimetre*Text area* 17.3 × 10.9 cm*Interlinear spacing* 1.5 cm*Script* The main text in naskh, incidentals in *riqā'**Binding* Contemporary*Accession no.* QUR123

*Comparative items* Istanbul, Museum of Turkish & Islamic Arts, MS. 564;<sup>1</sup> Mashhad, Astan-i Quds Library, Qur'an MS. 85;<sup>2</sup> and Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS. Fatih 10.<sup>3</sup>

1. Lentz &amp; Lowry 1989, cat. no. 19.

2. Ma'ani 1347, p. 129.

3. Ersoy 1988, pl. 8.

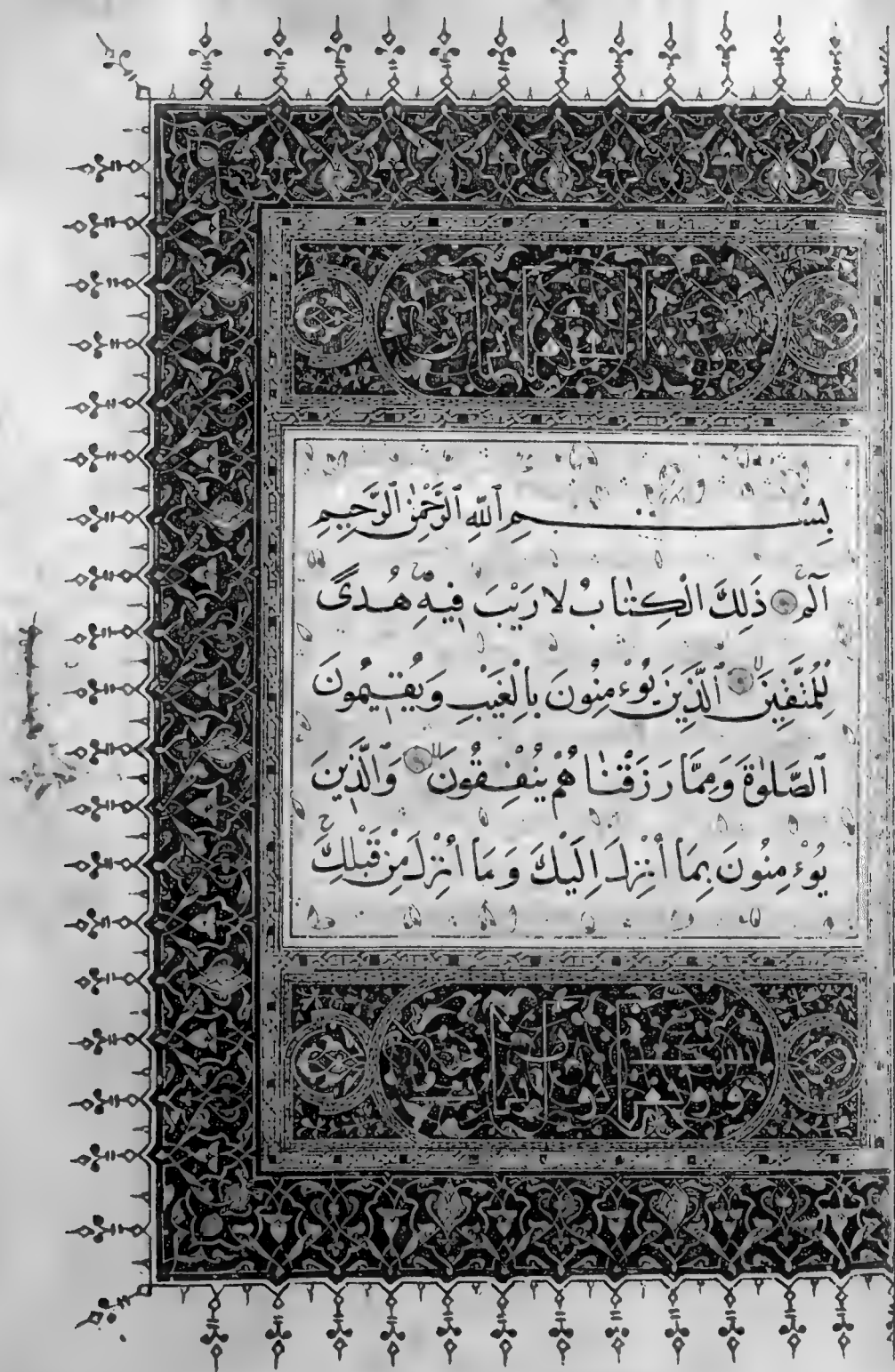
It is difficult to attribute manuscripts of this type to a particular place of production with any certainty. Its decoration can be compared with Iranian manuscripts such as a Qur'an in the Museum of Turkish & Islamic Arts in Istanbul, or another in the Astan-i Quds Library in Mashhad which was written by Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Tughra'i, known as Mantarji, in 1406–7. However, it can also be compared with 15th-century Turkish illumination, such as that in a manuscript in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul.

Folio 1a bears a lobed medallion with gold and orange arabesque decoration. There was probably a facing page of illumination which is now lost. Folios 1b–2a are decorated in a style typical of Shiraz in the first half of the 15th century, with gold floral sprays on blue or white, surrounding medallions and the central cross shapes. Folios 2b–3a contain the opening surahs, and the text is surrounded by decoration which could be Iranian or Turkish.

The surah headings are in gold *riqā'* on a ground hatched in pink. Margins are ruled in gold, and verses are punctuated by gold discs with coloured dots. Every tenth verse is marked in the margin by the word '*ashar*' ('ten') in gold, and *juz'* and *hizb* divisions are indicated in the same way; these markers were written upside down in the right-hand margin and the right way up in the left-hand margin.

The brown morocco covers are stamped with central medallions and corner-pieces of gilt leather overlay. The doublures are of brown morocco and are decorated with a simple knotted device.





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الَّذِي هَدَىٰ  
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ  
الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ  
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَا لَكَ

يَوْمَ الدِّينِ أَيَاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَأَيَاكَ نَسْتَغِيثُ اهْدِنَا

الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ

عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا لِيَدْخُلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ  
 حَيَاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَيُكَفِّرُ  
 عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ ۚ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا  
 وَلِلْعَذَابِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ  
 الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ ظَنُّ السَّوْءِ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ وَغَضِبَ  
 اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا  
 وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَكِيمًا  
 إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا لَتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ  
 وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّدُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا  
 الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَكَ اتَّبَاعًا يَمُونُ اللَّهُ بِدَا اللَّهِ فَوْقَ  
 دِيهِمْ فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَلَمَّا نَيْكَثَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ  
 رَفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا  
 سَبْقُولُكَ الْخُلَفَاءُ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلْنَا أَمْوَالَنَا

عَشْرًا



وَلَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ أَوْ أَرْسُلَكُمْ فِيهَا فَيُخَفِّكُمْ  
تَخْلَوْا وَيُخْرِجَ أَصْفَانَكُمْ هَاءُ نَسَمُ هُوَلَاءُ تَدْعُونَ  
لِنَفْسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يَخْلُ وَمَنْ يَخْلُ فَإِنَّمَا  
يَخْلُ عَزْ نَفْسِهِ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ وَإِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا  
يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُمْ

سُورَةُ الْفَتْحِ وَفِي عَشْرَةِ آيَاتٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا لِيُغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ  
وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا  
مُسْتَقِيمًا وَنَبْضُكَ اللَّهُ نَضْرًا عَزِيزًا هُوَ الَّذِي أَتَمَّ  
السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزِدَّادُوا إِيمَانًا  
مَعَ إِيْمَانِهِمْ وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ

19

Part 19 of a 30-part Qur'an

Ottoman, 15th century

24 folios, 31 × 21.5 cm, with  
9 lines to the page

*Material* A cream paper, laid,  
with an indeterminate number of  
lines to the centimetre; there are  
traces of chain lines

*Text area* 23.5 × 13.8 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1.5 cm

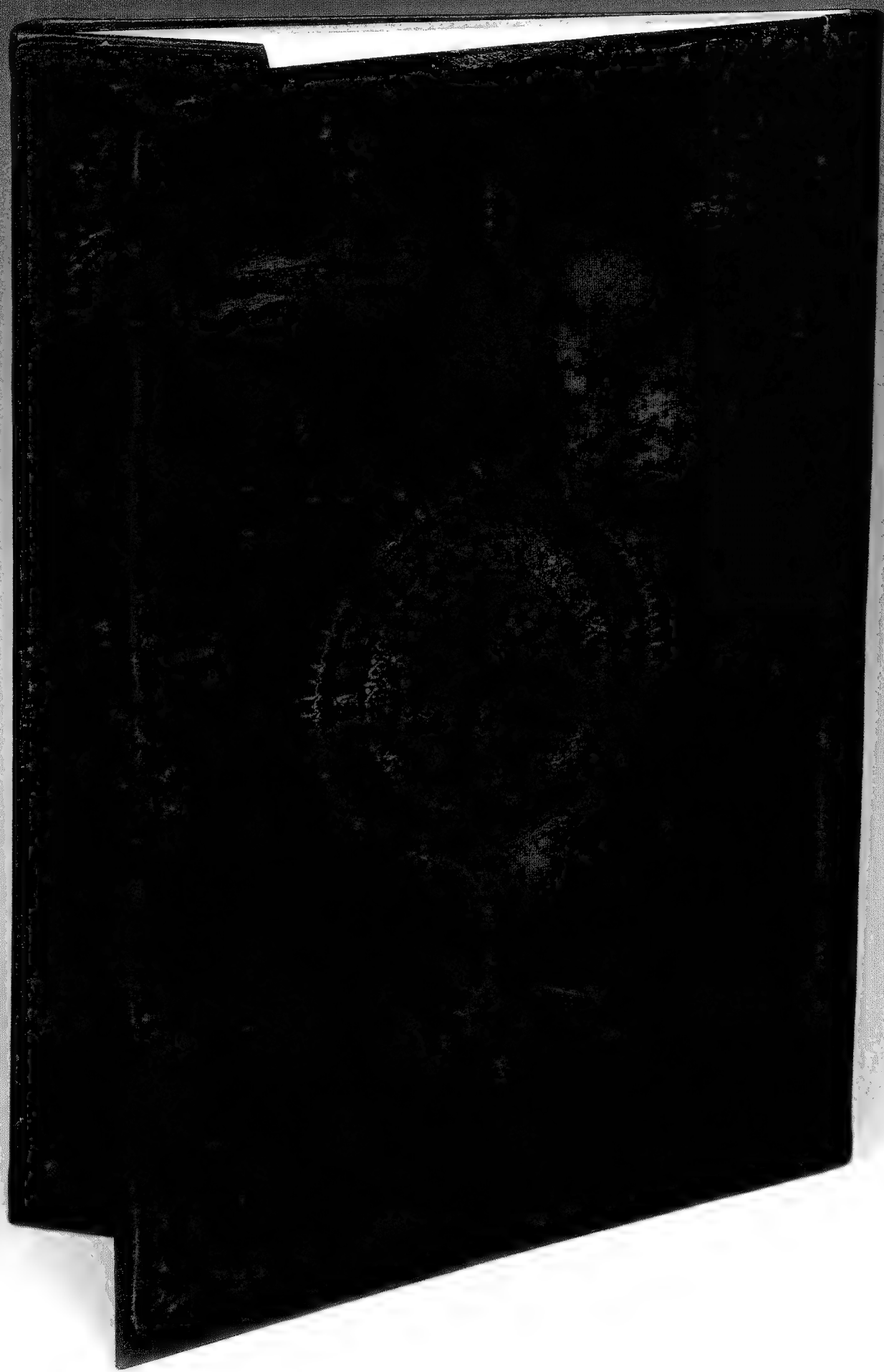
*Script* A combination of two sizes  
of what may be rayḥān

*Binding* Contemporary

*Accession no.* QUR432

The text is surrounded by gold rules and is written in two sizes of script whose style cannot be readily identified. Each page consists of three lines of the larger script, perhaps large *rayḥān* or *muḥaqqaq*, and these are separated by two panels containing three lines of the smaller script, which may be either a smaller variety of *rayḥān* or *naskh*. Verses are punctuated by gold rosettes, and every tenth verse is marked in the margin by the word 'ashar ('ten') in gold *thulth*. Surah headings are simply written in gold.

The covers have stamped central medallions with pendants. The fields of the medallions are decorated with rosettes in hexagons and are framed by two concentric borders of knotwork. The pendants are quatrefoils with swastika centres, a device that is repeated in the corners of the main field. There is an outer border of interlocking lappets with lotus and vegetal decoration.



وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ كَلَامَانَا فِيهِمْ وَعَهْدُ

رَاعُونَ ❀ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُخَافُونَ  
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ❀ الَّذِينَ يَرُونَ الْفُرْدَ وَرُفُفَهُمْ  
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ❀ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِن سُلَالَةٍ

مَرِطِينَ ❀ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا

نُطْقَهُ فِي فَرَارٍ مَّخْبِينَ ❀ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النَّفْسَ  
عَلَقَةً خَلَقْنَا أَلْفَافَةً مَضْنَةً خَلَقْنَا الْمَضْغَةَ  
عَظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا

أَخْرَفْنَا ذَاكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَرُ



# سُورَةُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَابِ قَوْسَيْنِ أَلْفًا

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
فَذَاقُوا الْمَوْءُئُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صُلَاةِهِمْ  
كَانُوا يَنْصُتُونَ وَيَذَرُونَ هُمْ عَنِ الْغَفْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ❀

## وَالَّذِينَ لَهُمْ لَكَ كَوْفَةٌ فَلَاحُوزَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِضُونَ ❀ أَلَا  
عَلَىٰ أَرْوَاحِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ  
غَيْرُ مَرْمِيْنَ ❀ فَمَنْ أَنْعَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ

## فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ❀



## Parts 6 and 13 of a 30-part Qur'an

Ottoman, circa 1450–1500

41 folios, 35.5 × 25.5 cm, in Part 6; 43 folios, 35.5 × 26.5 cm, in Part 13; with 5 lines to the page in both

*Material* Part 6 is on a coated, highly polished off-white wove paper, with sagging chain lines visible at intervals of 5 cm; there is vertical scoring, presumably from polishing. Part 13 is on a translucent cream paper, laid, but with no visible details; there are rib shadows and triple chain lines, and the paper is heavily scraped from polishing

*Text area* 22.6 × 15 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 5 cm

*Script* Muḥaqqaq

*Bindings* The covers of Part 6 are contemporary; those of Part 13 date from the 17th or 18th century

*Accession nos* QUR289 and QUR229

*Comparative items* Sotheby's 1982, lot no. 211, Sotheby's 1983, lot no. 167, Sotheby's 1984a, lot no. 184, and Sotheby's 1984b, lot no. 247, are sections of the same Qur'an. Compare also Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS. Fatih 10.<sup>1</sup>

1. Ersoy 1988, pl. 8.

The opening folios of both sections are illuminated in two different hybrid styles, curious mixtures of Timurid, Mamluk and even earlier elements: the section number in gold Kufic on a gold arabesque ground in Part 13, for example, is most archaic, while the elaborate border of blue spikes resembles those found in 15th-century Mamluk manuscripts. This suggests that the decoration is 15th-century Ottoman work, for there is a similar manuscript dated 1461 in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul.

From folio 3b to folio 16a of Part 6 the first, second, fourth and fifth lines are in gold, and the third line is in blue. In the rest of Part 6 and in the whole of Part 13, the first, third and fifth lines are in gold, and the second and fourth lines are in blue. The only surah heading in Part 6, that of *Sūrat al-mā'idah* (v), is missing, and the space has been left blank. In Part 13, the two headings, of *Sūrat al-ra'd* (xiii) and *Sūrat Ibrāhīm* (xiv), were also omitted, but the spaces left blank were filled by roughly painted headings at a later date. In both sections the text is framed by crudely ruled lines in blue; the verses are separated by gold rosettes with red and blue dots; and each group of ten verses is marked by a medallion in the margin. The final page of Part 6 is a replacement.

The contemporary brown morocco covers of Part 6 are decorated with large central medallions in which gold and blind tooling have been used to create a pattern of interlace. The outer border is decorated in the same way. There are corner-pieces of knots, and pyramids of knots project into the upper and lower fields. The leather sheets of the doublures are decorated with a much-faded geometric design of interlinked octagons with surrounding panels. The later brown morocco covers of Part 13 have deeply sunk, gilt central medallions and corner-pieces. The doublures are of green morocco and also have deeply sunk central medallions and corner-pieces.





لَا تُخَالِفُوا اللَّهَ الْمُجْتَمِعَ الشُّرُوعَ الْقَوْلَ الْأَمْرَ

ظَلَمَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا أَتَبَدُّوا

خَيْرًا أَوْ خِفَافَةً أَوْ تَغْفُوا عَنْ نِيَّتِكُمْ



سورة التوبة

لنفسه فلما كلمه قال انك اليوم لدينا

مكير اذيت قال جعلنا على خير

لا فط ان حفظ علمي ورك ذلك

سورة التوبة



وَمَا أَبْرَى نَفْسِي أَنْ تَقْبَلَ مَا رَأَى بِالسَّوْدِ

إِلَّا مَا حَمَرْتَنِي إِلَيْكَ بِغَفْوَةِ رَحِمٍ

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ أَيْتُونِي بِمَا اسْتَخْلَصَ

وَيَسْخَرُ الْكَافِرِينَ الَّذِينَ يَلْعَنُونَ  
الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُكَفِّرُونَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُكَفِّرُونَ

بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا لِّنَفْسِكَ وَمِنْ عِنْدِ عَالِي الْكَوْنِ

بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا لِّنَفْسِكَ وَمِنْ عِنْدِ عَالِي الْكَوْنِ

بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا لِّنَفْسِكَ وَمِنْ عِنْدِ عَالِي الْكَوْنِ

أُولَئِكَ وَالنَّانِي الْأَرْضَ نَقِصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا

وَاللَّهُ خَكِيمٌ لَا مَعْقِبَ لِحُكْمِهِ

وَهُوَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ وَقَدْ مَكَرَ

الَّذِينَ مَرَقْنَا بِهِمُ قُلُوبَهُ الْمَكْرُ جَمِيعًا

يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ

21

# Single-volume Qur'an

Istanbul, circa 1460–1470

640 folios, 22.6 × 15 cm, with

11 lines to the page

*Material* A hard, cream wove

paper, well-beaten and polished

*Text area* 16.5 × 9.2 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1.5 cm

*Script* Main text in naskh,

incidentals in thulth

*Patron* Mercan Ağa

*Documentation* A certificate

of commissioning

*Binding* Contemporary

*Accession no.* QUR34

*Comparative items* London,

British Library, OR.MS.13,386;<sup>1</sup>

Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library,

MS.A1672;<sup>2</sup> and cat. 24

1. Rogers 1983, cat.no.21.

2. Istanbul 1983, cat.no.E3.

3. Ayverdi 1973, pp.1453–4.

4. OR.MS.13,386, which is written in a very similar type of naskh. Rogers has suggested an early 16th-century date, but I would place it in the second half of the 15th century. Unfortunately, the original colophon has been erased, and one in the name of Derviş Ali has been substituted, perhaps because he completed the manuscript in some way.

5. Topkapı Palace Library, MS.A1672.

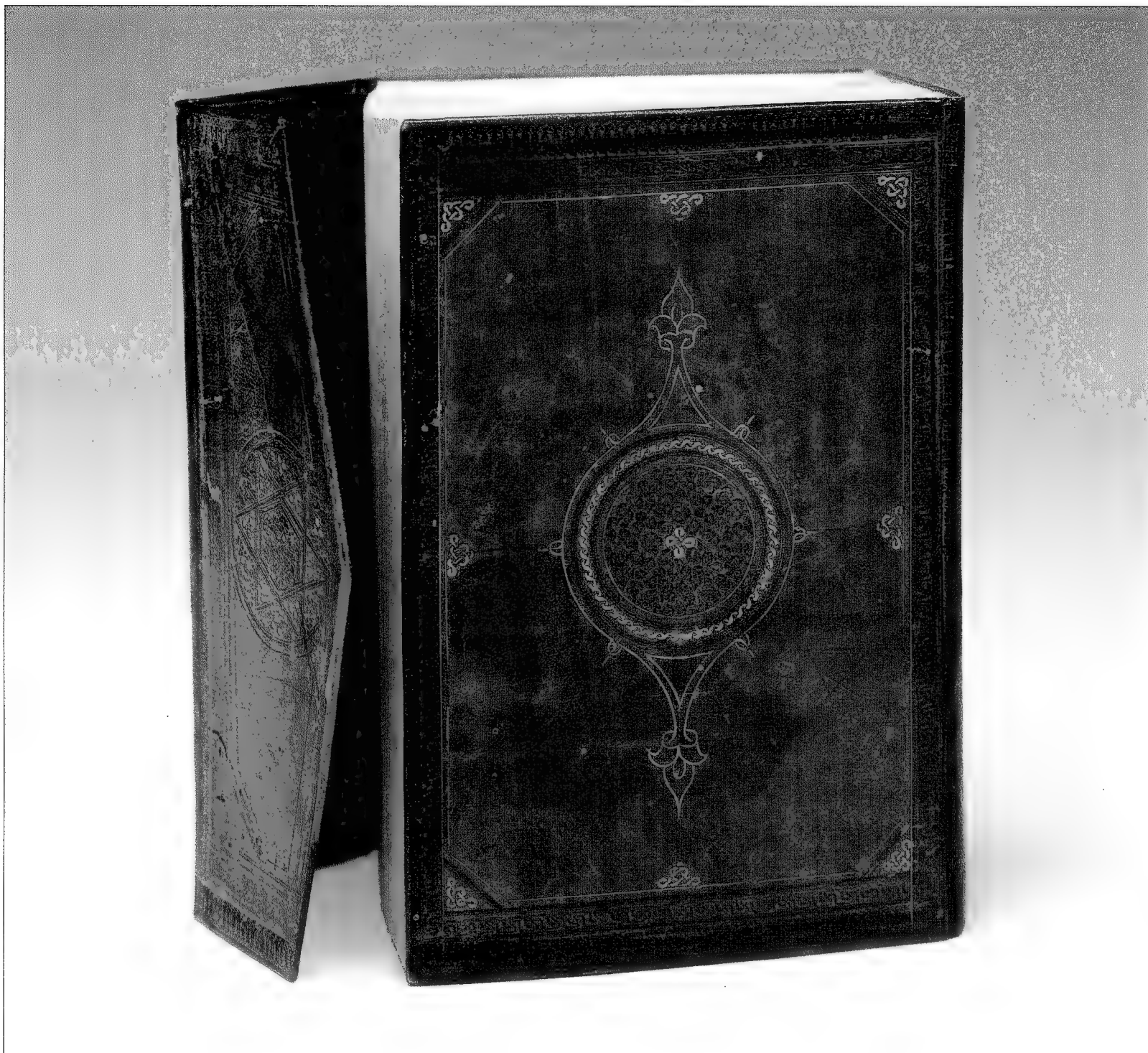
The Mercan Ağa who commissioned this manuscript is probably to be identified with the Mercan Ağa who erected a number of buildings in Istanbul shortly after the Ottoman conquest. In 1464 a *waqf* document was drawn up in his name for a complex in Istanbul that has since been rebuilt, and he was also the founder of a mosque in the Sirt Hamamı quarter of the city.<sup>3</sup>

Cat. 21 contains illumination of the highest quality – it is greatly superior to the decoration of a Qur'an in the British Library produced about the same time, for example.<sup>4</sup> Its frontispiece shows the combination of Timurid and Mamluk motifs characteristic of 15th-century Ottoman illumination, and the vivid colours used – salmon, bright green and blue – are also typical of Ottoman illumination at this time. In the centre of each page lobed roundels frame smaller roundels of the same shape which contain tight gold arabesques on a green ground. The spaces around the inner roundel are filled with larger, loosely interlocked arabesques in red and white. On the right-hand page the ground is decorated with a gold treble-dot motif, while on the left the motif is white. This colour change from one page to another is also seen in the outer borders of the pages, where the dark red of the interior of the palmettes on the right is replaced by black on the facing page. The same alternation of colours can be seen in the decoration of the opening pages of text.



21 doublure & envelope flap



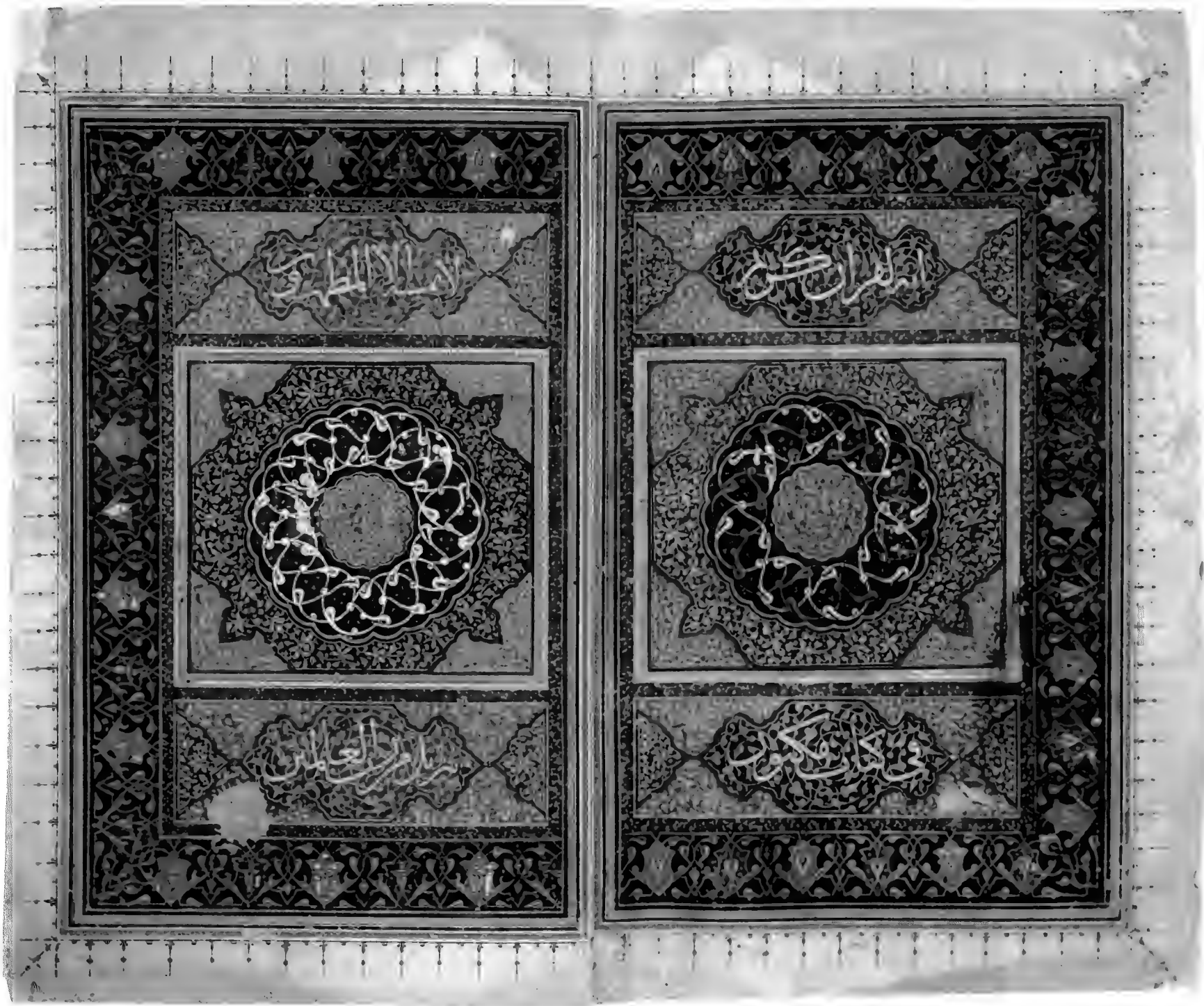


21 outer cover

The closing pages of the manuscript (folios 639b–640a) are also finely illuminated. Here it is not the colours that change from one page to another, but the drawing of the decoration. The floral sprays in the central field on the right are filled in with gold, but on the left the flowers are merely outlined by the artist's brush in a manner reminiscent of the decoration on an earlier lacquer binding on an undated manuscript made for Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror.<sup>5</sup> The central medallion on the right contains the certificate of commissioning in the name of Mercan Ağa written over gold arabesques. The medallion on the facing page has much larger arabesques with four polychrome cicada shapes of the type borrowed from Chinese art in the previous century. Folio 640b is blank but has a border of gold sprays on black with an narrow inner border in red.

The fine brown morocco covers have central medallions in gold- and blind-tooled interlace. There are gold-tooled knots in the corners and at the centre of the edges of the main fields and a linked swastika border. The doublures are decorated with the same printed leather as cat. 24, but the flap is printed in a geometric pattern with arabesque and rosette fillers.





## سورة فاحش الحركات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَالِكِ  
يَوْمَ الدِّينِ أَمَّا نَعْبُدُكَ فَسَتَعْبُدُونَ  
أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ  
عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

## سبع ايات مكه

## سورة النور مائت

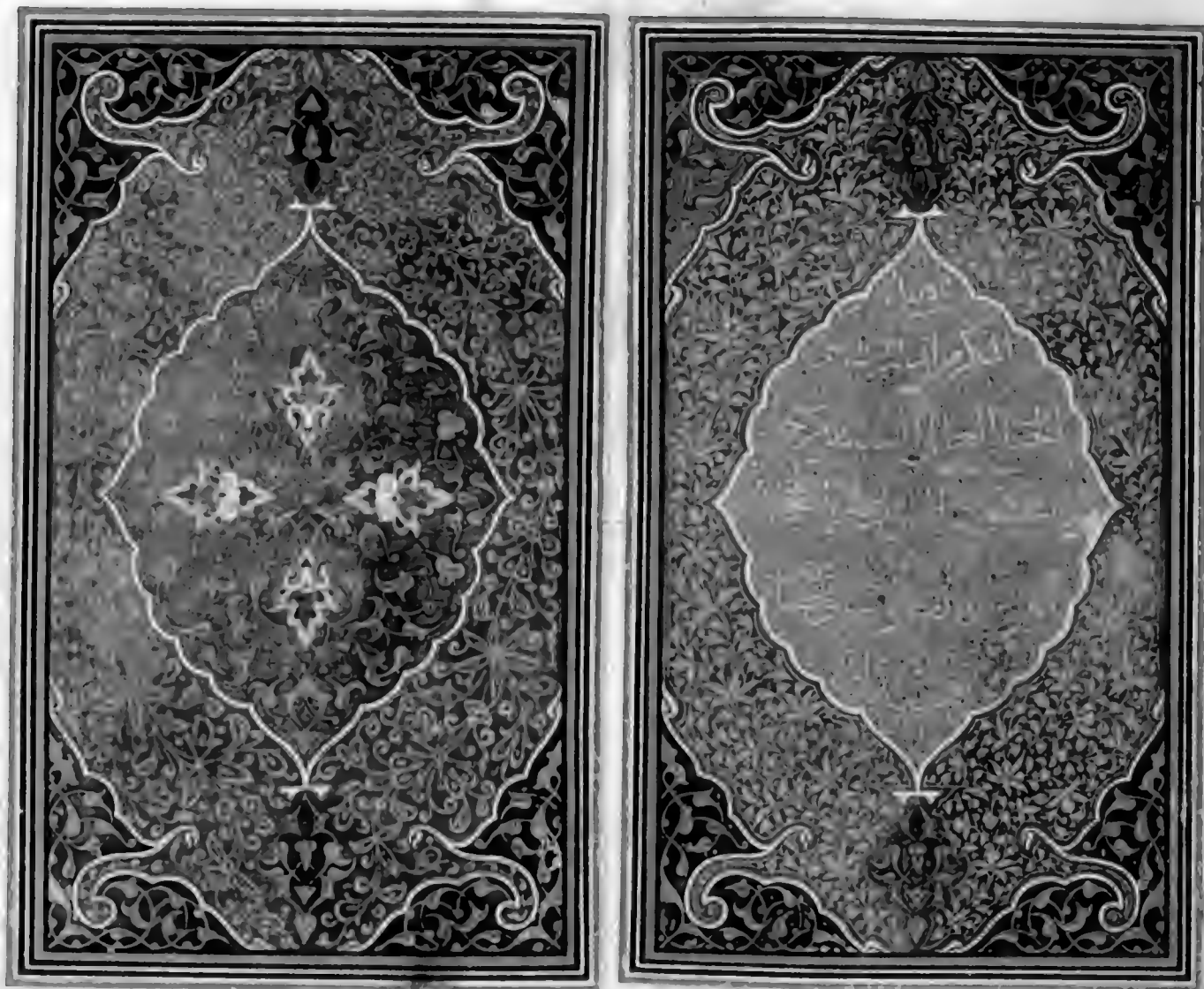
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْقُرْآنُ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ  
هُدًى لِلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ  
بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا  
رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ

## سبع ايات مكه

اِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَا يَأْتِ أَفَلَا يَسْمَعُونَ  
 اُولَئِكَ يَرَوْنَ اَنَا نَسُوقُ الْمَاءَ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ  
 اُجْرُزْ فَخُجْرُ بِهِ زَرْعًا نَا كُلْمِنْهُ  
 اَنَعَامُهُمْ وَاَنْفُسُهُمْ أَفَلَا يَبْصُرُونَ  
 وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْفَتْحُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
 صَادِقِينَ قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ  
 كَفَرُوا اِيْمَانُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ  
 فَاعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَاَنْظُرْ اَنَّهُمْ مُّسْتَظَرُونَ  
 الْحَزَابُ نَبِيٌّ  
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بَر

يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ اِنَّ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُطِيعُ الْكَافِرِينَ  
 وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ اِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا  
 حَكِيمًا وَاَتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحَىٰ اِلَيْكَ  
 مِنْ رَبِّكَ اِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ  
 خَبِيرًا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ  
 بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ  
 مِنْ قَلْبَيْنِ فِيْ جَوْفٍ وَمَا جَعَلَ اَزْوَاجَكُمْ  
 الَّذِي تَظَاهَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ اُمَّهَاتِكُمْ  
 وَمَا جَعَلَ اَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ اَبْنَاءَكُمْ  
 ذَلِكَ قَوْلُكُمْ بِاَفْوَاهِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ  
 الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ اَدْعُوهُمْ





## Single-volume Qur'an

Istanbul, AH 899/AD 1493–4

302 folios, 16.8 × 11.5 cm, with

15 lines to the page

*Material* A highly polished cream paper, laid, with 10 lines to the centimetre; triple chain lines are visible

*Text area* 11.6 × 7.1 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 0.8 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh, incidentals in thulth

*Scribe* Fazlullah ibn Velî, called Araboğlu

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Contemporary, Ottoman or Mamluk

*Accession no.* QUR204

*Comparative items* Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, MS.EH 320, EH 321 and EH 58;<sup>1</sup> and cat. 8

1. Karatay 1962, cat.nos 806, 807 and 810. For MS.EH 58, see also Atil 1987, cat.no. 8.

2. Atil 1987, p. 293.

3. Topkapı Palace Library, MS.EH 320 and EH 321.

4. Compare cat. 8 and Topkapı Palace Library, MS.EH 58, which is dated 1523–4.

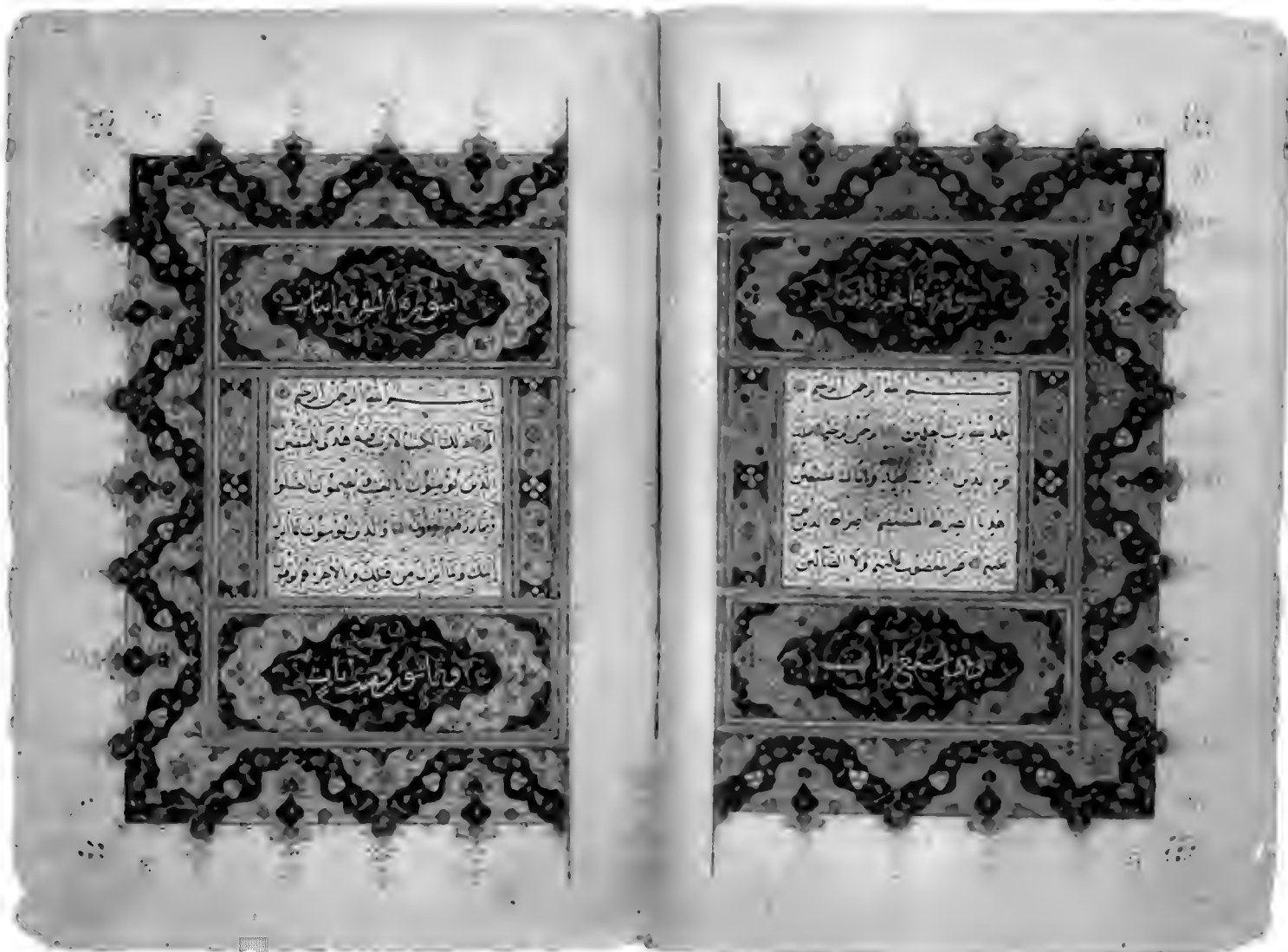
5. *Wars* (*memecylon tinctorium*) is a plant that grows in the Yemen whose red and yellow berries are used for dying leather (Chicago 1981, p. 60).

The full-page colophon of this manuscript, which is written in gold *riqā'*, states that the scribe, Fazlullah ibn Velî, called Araboğlu, was responsible for both the copying of the text and the illumination. This artist was almost certainly the same person as the Fazlullah whose name occurs in a register found in the Topkapı Palace archives.<sup>2</sup> In this document he is recorded as having received a gift of 500 *akçes* from the Sultan in AH 910/AD 1505. Fazlullah's work is also known from two copies of *Sūrat al-an'ām* (vi) he made in 1506–7.<sup>3</sup> In these he gave his name as 'Nakkaş Fazlullah, known as Ibn al-'Arab'; both Ibn al-'Arab and Araboğlu mean 'son of the Arab'. Thus Fazlullah is one of the few 15th-century artists mentioned in the court records whose work we can actually identify, and this manuscript is one of the earliest known productions of the imperial *nakkaşhâne*. It is therefore of considerable historical importance, despite its relatively modest appearance.

The two opening pages are simply but finely illuminated in a style that shows the influence of Turkoman manuscript production, and their decoration provides an interesting link between the illumination of late Turkoman manuscripts and that of Ottoman manuscripts of the first half of the 16th century.<sup>4</sup> Different shades of gold, blue and red were used, even though both pages were painted at the same time.

Surah headings are in gold *thulth* and are set within undecorated rectangles. Verses are punctuated by gold roundels with red and blue dots, and the margins are ruled in gold. Each tenth verse is marked by the word '*ashar*' ('ten') in gold *thulth* in the margin, and other textual divisions are indicated in the same way. There were a number of later seal impressions at various points throughout the manuscript, but these have been erased, leaving only one on folio 302a that is too faint to be legible.

The brown morocco covers have blind-tooled central medallions and borders, and there are stamps in the corners of the main field. There is no way of ascertaining whether the binding is original, but it is certainly not later than the date of the manuscript. It has several stamps with the word '*amal* . . . ('work of . . .'), but the name of the bookbinder is too worn to be read with certainty; it may be Mir Musa. On the binding flap there are a number of inscriptions. One of these, which is partially under a repair, describes the binding as *milḥafah muwarrasah maṣbūghah bi'l-wars, wa-huwa ṣibgh aṣfar* ('a yellow cover, dyed with wars, which is a yellow dye').<sup>5</sup>



22 folios 1b-2a



22 folios 30rb-302a

23

## Single-volume Qur'an

Ottoman, AH900/AD1494-5

336 folios, 25 × 16.2 cm, with  
13 lines to the page  
*Material* A highly polished cream  
paper, laid, but with an  
indeterminate number of lines to  
the centimetre; there are sagging  
triple chain lines  
*Text area* 17 × 9.8 cm  
*Interlinear spacing* 1.2 cm  
*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in thulth  
*Scribe* Abdullah el-Amâsî  
*Documentation* A colophon  
*Binding* 16th or 17th century  
*Accession no.* QUR5

According to the colophon, this manuscript is the work of Abdullah el-Amâsî, a pupil of Şeyh Hamdullah. The illumination is rather coarse but could be contemporary, although 1494-5 seems too early a date for the large, fleshy gold leaves, for these are usually thought of as typical of Safavid work of the 16th century.

Two different papers have been used, apparently for decorative effect. Surah headings are in a variety of colours or gold and are set in plain panels, on a gold or natural ground; the final words of the previous surah often run into the panels reserved for the heading and are usually left in a white cartouche. The verses are marked by gold rosettes with red and blue dots, and the margins are ruled in gold.

The brown morocco covers have stamped central medallions and corner-pieces of gilt leather overlay which are decorated with floral motifs and cloud bands.

24

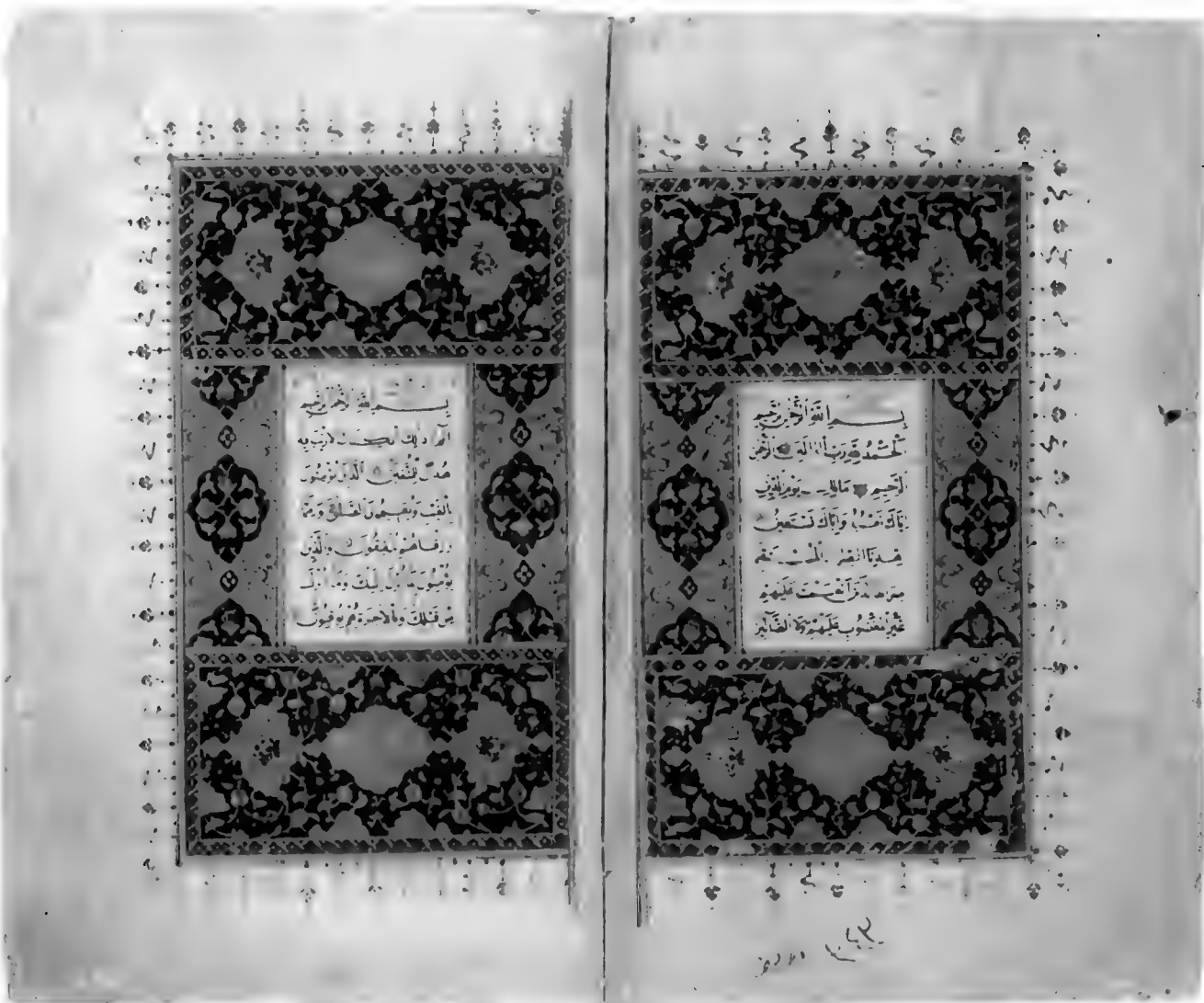
## Part 20 of a 30-part Qur'an

Ottoman, circa 1490-1520

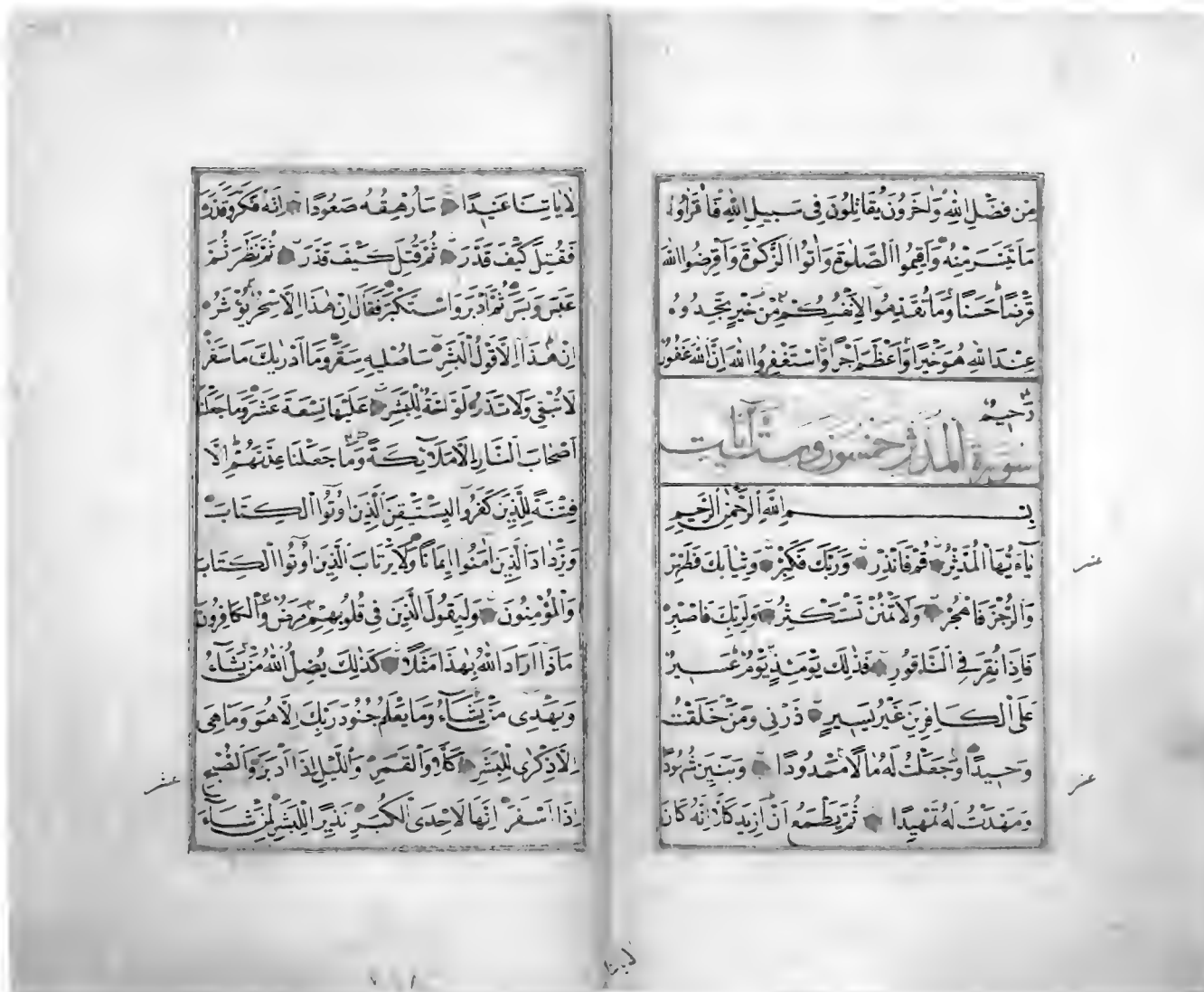
28 folios, 26.1 × 17.8 cm, with  
7 lines to the page  
*Material* Buff and cream wove  
papers, very heavily beaten  
*Text area* 17.3 × 11 cm  
*Interlinear spacing* 2.5 cm  
*Script* The main text in rayḥān,  
incidentals in naskh  
*Binding* Contemporary  
*Accession no.* QUR135

Surah headings are in gold *naskh*, while the text is in *rayḥān* script. The text was written on impressed lines, and another impressed line 1.2 cm above the first marks the upper limit of the letters *alif* and *lām*. Gold circles separate the verses, and each tenth verse is marked in the Ottoman manner by the word '*ashar*' ('ten') written in gold in the margin.

The brown morocco covers have central medallions in blind-tooled interlace with borders of repeating quatrefoils. Only the doublure of the flap remains. This consists of a leather sheet printed with lotuses, peonies and arabesques in lozenges. Some shapes contain the expression *al-'izz al-dā'im wa'l-iqbāl*.



23 folios 1b-2a



23 folios 317b-318a



بَعْدَ أَنْزَلَتْ إِلَيْكَ وَأَذِيعُ إِلَيْكَ لَا  
تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ  
اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ إِلَّا إِلَهُ الْأُمُوكِ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ  
إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَسْبُ النَّاسُ أَنْ يَبْذُوكَ وَإِنْ

بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا تَجْزِيكَ الدِّينَ عَمَلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ  
إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ أَلَمْ يَرْضَ  
عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنُ لَأَذْلِكَ الْمَعَادِ فَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ  
مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْهُدَى وَمَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ  
وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُو أَنْ يُبَلِّغَ إِلَيْكَ الْكَلَامَ  
الْأَرْحَمَ مِنْكَ فَلَا تَكُ تَرْجُو هَبْرًا  
لِلْكَافِرِينَ وَلَا يَصِدُّكَ عَنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ

25

## Volume containing 12 surahs of the Qur'an

Ottoman, *circa* 1490–1500

46 folios, 16.5 × 11 cm, with  
11 lines to the page  
*Material* A thick, well-polished,  
buff wove paper with inclusions.  
The additional folios are of a buff  
paper, laid, with 5–6 lines to the  
centimetre  
*Text area* 10.5 × 6 cm  
*Interlinear spacing* 1 cm  
*Script* Naskh  
*Scribe* Hamdullah, called  
Ibn al-Shaykh  
*Documentation* A colophon  
*Binding* 16th century  
*Accession no.* QUR291

This manuscript, which is written in excellent *naskh*, contains surahs VI, XXXVI, XLVIII, LV, LVI, LXVII, LXXVIII and CX–CXIV. The hand certainly resembles that of the great master Şeyh Hamdullah, although the fine illumination may be later. The text is framed by a double gold ruling, and the verses are punctuated by gold rosettes. Groups of ten verses are marked by medallions of varying design, with blue finials above and below. The surah headings are not inscribed, but the panels have been illuminated. The first page of text is surmounted by a head-piece which extends upwards into the margin and has floral finials.

Several pages have been added at both ends of the manuscript. They contain prayers written in a casual Maghribi hand, probably in the 17th century. There are two seal impressions dated AH 1306/AD 1888–9; one reads 'Hasan Tahsin ibn Osman', and the other 'Hasan Tahsin'.

The brown morocco covers have sunk central medallions and corner-pieces decorated with floral arabesques in brown against a gold ground. The doublures are also of brown morocco and are decorated with medallions painted in gold.

26

## Single-volume Qur'an

Ottoman, *circa* 1490–1500

373 folios, 16.6 × 11.5 cm, with  
13 lines to the page  
*Material* A buff wove paper with  
no visible details  
*Text area* 11.3 × 6.5 cm  
*Interlinear spacing* 0.8 cm  
*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in thulth  
*Scribe* Perhaps Şeyh Hamdullah  
*Documentation* A colophon  
*Binding* 16th or 17th century  
*Accession no.* QUR252  
*Comparative item* Geneva,  
Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan  
Collection, MS. 5.<sup>1</sup>

The script of this Qur'an is of the finest quality, but it differs from most of the published work of Şeyh Hamdullah in the addition of a short downward stroke (*tarwīṣah*) to the letter *bā'* of the *basmalah*. Only one other published example exhibits this characteristic.<sup>2</sup>

The opening pages of text are fully illuminated in a 15th-century style, but about one third of the original illumination has been replaced. There is other evidence of restoration: several portions of the text at the beginning and end of the manuscript have been remounted; some of the original catchwords and marginal inscriptions were also remounted at an early date; and the edges of the manuscript have been gilded. The surah headings are in gold and are set in plain gold panels. Verses are separated by gold circles, and each tenth verse is marked by the word '*ashar*' ('ten') written in the margin. Other textual divisions are indicated in a similar manner. The margins have been ruled in gold, and reading notes are in red.

The brown morocco covers have gilt medallions with pendants, corner-pieces and cartouche borders, all decorated with arabesques and cloud scrolls. The doublures are of red morocco, to which a lozenge design in gold has been applied.

1. Welch 1972–8, II, p. 35.

2. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan  
Collection, MS. 5.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَخَلَقَ الظَّالِمَاتِ  
وَالنُّورَ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءَ وَخَلَقَ الْبَشَرِ مِنْ نَسْلِهِمْ وَخَلَقَ  
الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ فَخَلَقَ جَلَّ وَجَلَّ وَجَلَّ  
عِنْدَهُ تَمَاسُكٌ مَعْرُوفٌ وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ بِكُمْ سِرٌّ وَجَهْرٌ وَبِقُدْرَتِهِ  
يَكُونُ مَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْ تَرْفَاتٍ زَيْتٍ لَا تَكُونُ

عَنْهَا مَعْرِضٌ مَدَدُهُ نَوَاحِلُ الْمَلَكَةِ هَبْ  
مُسَوِّفَ بَابِهِمْ نَسَاءً مَلَكًا نَوَاحِلُ الْمَلَكَةِ  
الَّذِي رَوَاكَ مَلَكًا مِنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ مِنْ مَلَكَةٍ  
فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا مَلَكٌ لَكُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ بِطَرَفِهِمْ  
مَدْرًا رَاكٍ وَخَلَقْنَا الْأَنْبِيَاءَ مِنْ نَحْوِهِمْ فَخَلَقْنَا  
لَهُمْ نُسُوبَهُمْ وَالنَّسَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ فَرَاغَ الْعَرَبِ وَأَوَّلُوا  
سَرَّيْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي ذِكْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ أَمْرٌ  
لَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ كِتَابًا الْعِلْمَ الْأَخْبَرَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ  
وَقَالَ الْوَلَا الْوَلَا تَزِلَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ وَمَا رَأَى مَلَكًا  
لَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ كِتَابًا لَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ كِتَابًا لَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ  
لَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ كِتَابًا لَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ كِتَابًا لَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِي آتَى  
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَصَّوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَصَّوْا بِالنِّسْرِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
وَبَلِّغْ لِكُلِّ صَبْرٍ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَزَلْ فِي حَمَلٍ مَالًا وَنَعْدَةً  
يَحْتَبِ أَنْ مَالَهُ أَحَدُهُ فَلَا يَسْتَبْدِنُ فِي الْخَطْمَةِ  
وَمَا أَدْرِيكَ مَا الْخَطْمَةُ تَارِقَةُ الْمَوْدَةِ الْبَنَى  
تَطْلُعُ عَلَى لَفِيدَةٍ أُنْعَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ مُؤَصَّدَةً فِي عَمَلٍ  
بِالْمَلِكِ مَدَدُهُ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْمَدَدُ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ بَلَّ بِصَحَابِ الْبَيْتِ الْمَجْمَلِ  
كَدَمِهِ فِي تَسْلِيلٍ وَأَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ طِيلٌ أَمَّا يَكِلُ

رَهْمِهِمْ نَحْيَانُ مِنْ سَجَلٍ فَعَلِمَهُمْ كَصَبِّ مَالِكٍ  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
لَا يَأْتِي قِرْنِي إِلَّا بِهَيْجَةٍ رَحْلَةُ الشَّيْءِ وَالضَّبَبِ  
فَلْيَصْبِرْ وَأَرْبَ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ الَّذِي طَعَمَهُمْ مِنْ مَوْجِ  
وَلَهُمْ مِنْ حُفْرٍ  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَكْذِبُ بِالذِّينِ قَدِ ابْتَدَأَ  
يَدْعُو الْبَيْتِمْ فَلَا يَحْصِلُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَيْتِمْ  
فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ  
الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاوُونَ يَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



# India in the Age of Bihari

Timur's invasion of northern India in 1398–9 brought about the dissolution of the sultanate of Delhi. One of the beneficiaries was the man Timur appointed as governor of Multan, Khidr Khan, whose short-lived dynasty, the Sayyids, held Delhi for the next 40 years. In 1451 the Sayyids were overthrown by an Afghan chieftain, Bahlul Khan Lodi, who restored Delhi's position as the capital of the region. Descendants of Bahlul Khan continued to rule until the battle of Panipat in 1526, when the victory of the Timurid prince Babur allowed him to found the Mughal dynasty, which ruled until the 19th century.

The century and a quarter between Timur's intervention in India and the arrival of Babur is a period of relative obscurity in the history of the arts of Muslim India. There are fine architectural remains in Gujarat, but few illustrated manuscripts or Qur'ans have survived. The illustrated manuscripts have attracted some interest in recent years, but they are too few in number for us to form an overall picture of their development, and it is not always easy to distinguish between those produced in India and those which are provincial Iranian. In general, Indian artists seem to have followed Timurid traditions, and this is true of Qur'ans in this century, with the exception of the script. Most of the Indian Qur'ans that have survived from the pre-Mughal period were written in *biḥārī*, a peculiarly Indian form of *naskh* whose origins are still obscure and which virtually disappeared with the advent of the Mughals. In *biḥārī* script, the emphasis is on the sublinear elements of the Arabic letter forms, which are greatly thickened and end in sharp points. It is usually assumed that the name of this script was derived from that of the province of Bihar in eastern India, but Bihar was not particularly important as a centre of Islam. There is an alternative spelling, *bahārī*, and it has been suggested that this is the correct form and that it is derived from the size (*bahār*) that was used to prepare paper for writing.

Few Qur'ans in *biḥārī* are signed and dated. There are two important exceptions. One was copied in Gwalior near Delhi in 1398, and the other is dated 1483 and was produced in the Deccan.<sup>1</sup> The illumination of these two manuscripts is quite different, but in both cases it is superior in style and execution to most other examples of the Sultanate period. The most frequently used colours in these are a strong orange, a milky blue and yellow, and motifs such as floral sprays, quatrefoils and chains were painted in gold directly onto a blue ground. The Khalili Collection contains a Qur'an in black *biḥārī* script, cat. 28 below, and its extensive illumination is an excellent example of the work of this period. Cat. 29 below, which was copied in two colours in an unusual variety of *muḥaqqaq*, may also be from pre-Mughal India, for unorthodox scripts of this type were employed for both monumental inscriptions and Qur'ans in this period.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the paucity of the evidence, it is clear that there was a rich tradition of manuscript production in India before the Mughals came to power and that this provided a sound basis for the blossoming of manuscript illustration and illumination after 1550.

1. London 1976, cat.no. 365, now in the Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan Collection Geneva;

and Bijapur, Archaeological Museum, MS. 912 (Brand &

Lowry 1985, cat.no. 71).

2. Rahman 1979, pls 3–15.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوجِبُ إِلَيَّ إِنَّمَا  
 الْوَكْرُ إِلَىٰ وَاحِدَةٍ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا  
 مَسْأَلُهُمْ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ  
 إِنَّمَا عَلَيْكُمْ سَوَاطِينُ آدَمَ  
 أَقْرَبُ أَمْ يَعْبُدُ مَا تُوعَدُونَ  
 إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ  
 وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْتُمُونَ وَإِنْ  
 آدَمُ لَعَلَّه فِتْنَةٌ لَّكُمْ وَمَتَاعٌ  
 إِلَىٰ حِينٍ قَالَ رَبِّ  
 اخْصِمْنِي بِالْحَقِّ وَرَبَّنَا اللَّهُمَّ  
 ائْتِنَا بِمَا نَسْتَعِينُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّ إِنَّ  
 زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ

قوله

قوله

قوله

قوله

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قوله

قوله

قوله

27

## Two folios

India, 15th century

Both folios 53.1 × 31.5 cm, with  
15 lines to the page

Material A thin, brittle cream  
paper, laid, with 7–8 lines to  
the centimetre

Text area 36.6 × 19.6 cm

Interlinear spacing 2 cm

Script Biḥārī

Accession no. QUR602

The text, which runs from *Sūrat al-anbiyā'* (XXI), verse 101, to *Sūrat al-ḥajj* (XXII), verse 2, on the first folio, and from *Sūrat al-sajdah* (XXXII), verse 20, to *Sūrat al-aḥzāb* (XXXIII), verse 2, on the second, is in black, with the word *Allāh* in red. Verses are separated by gold rosettes with blue dots. The large letter 'ayn (for 'ashar 'ten') next to the heading of *Sūrat al-ḥajj* indicates the end of a group of ten verses, while the large rosette on the *verso* of the same folio contains the words *thalāthah arbā'* ('three quarters') and marks a textual division. The same murky colours were used for the rosette and for the heading of *Sūrat al-aḥzāb*.

Alternative readings of certain words are given in the inner margin in red. The outer margin contains a commentary on parts of the text.

28

## A Qur'an in two volumes

India, 15th century

306 and 311 folios, 32.2 × 23 cm,  
with 13 lines to the page

Material A fine cream paper, laid,  
with 7 lines to the centimetre

Text area 23.5 × 15.2 cm

Interlinear spacing 2 cm

Script Biḥārī

Binding Modern

Accession no. QUR237

The script of this manuscript, which was probably originally bound as one volume, is an excellent example of *biḥārī*. Each page has a double border. The inner border contains words and phrases from the Qur'anic text written in red or blue. These are accompanied by a note on their vocalization, together with a number of single letters which must be the abbreviations for the authority cited, although there is no key. The outer border contains a Persian translation of the text copied in *naskh*. The first word of the verse is given in Arabic in red and is followed by a translation of the verse into Persian.

The text is divided into sevenths and thirtieths. The beginning of each *sub'* (seventh) is fully illuminated, and the text at this point is set against a decorated ground. Each *juz'* (thirtieth) is marked by an elaborate marginal ornament with coloured pendants above and below. The line of text at that point is in gold. Surah headings are set in panels with an ornament beside them in the margin. Both the panels and the marginal ornaments vary greatly. Next to each surah heading there is a note in Persian explaining the value of reading the surah, and how many times it should be read. Many of these notes are quoted on the authority of the Prophet. Verses are separated by gold rosettes with blue dots, and groups of ten verses are marked by a marginal medallion which bears the letter 'ayn (for 'ashar, 'ten').

The last few pages (folios 308a–311a of the second volume) are replacements, for they are in a different *biḥārī* hand and lack the reading notes and translation.

卷之六

...

[illegible]



خَفَّتِ الْمَوَالِي مِنْ  
 وَرَائِي وَكَانَتْ أَمْرًا  
 عَاقِرًا وَهَبَ لِي مِنْ  
 لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا يَرْشِدُنِي وَتُرِثُ  
 مِنْ أَلِ يَعْقُوبَ  
 وَاجْعَلْهُ رِثًا رَضِيًّا  
 يَا ذَكَرِيَا إِنَّا نَبْشُرُكَ  
 بِعَلَامٍ زَاهِيَةٍ يَتَّبِعُ  
 لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ

برکت دار است  
 یعقوب بعلم و نور  
 من آل یعقوب  
 من نیک بسند  
 بی ز لایمانان از انوار  
 از انوار  
 از انوار



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
كَبُرَ لَكُمْ  
رَحْمَةُ رَبِّكَ عَبْدُهُ  
زَكْرِيَّا إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ  
نَدَاءَ خَفِيٍّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ  
إِنِّي وَهِنُ الْعِظَمِ  
مِنْهُ وَاشْتَغَلَ الرَّبُّ  
شَيْئًا وَلَمْ أَكُنْ بِدَعَائِكَ  
رَبِّكَ شَفِيًّا نَوَاحِي

ما جاب عن سؤال

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## Qur'an fragment

Perhaps India, 15th century

104 folios, 38.5 × 31.5 cm, with 7 lines to the page

*Material* A fine cream paper, thin, hard and very smooth, but unpolished; it is laid, with 9 lines to the centimetre

*Text area* 31 × 25.5 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 4 cm

*Script* The main text in *muḥaqqaq*, incidentals in *thulth*

*Binding* Modern

*Accession no.* QUR413

*Comparative items* Dublin,

Chester Beatty Library, MS. 1456;<sup>1</sup> and two folios without a shelfmark in the same library.<sup>2</sup>

1. Arberry 1967, cat.no.65, where it is listed as Mamluk.

2. James 1980, no. 82.

3. MS. 1456. Another work in the same library, MS. 126, is one of a group of illustrated manuscripts in which excellent illumination has been combined with rather unsophisticated miniature painting. These have also been ascribed to India (Brend 1986).

4. In the *muḥaqqaq* Qur'an made for Sultan Öljeytū in Mosul in 1306–11, for example, the *alif* of the word *Allāh* is three times the height of the *lām* (see James 1988, fig. 68); in cat. 29, it is only one and a half times the height of the *lām*.

5. Compare, for example, QUR70, to be published in volume IV of this catalogue.

This fragment contains the text of parts of surahs III–VI and LXXXVII written in an unusual form of *muḥaqqaq*. The Qur'an from which it came does not seem to have been made in Iran, and, although an Ottoman provenance cannot be ruled out, the most likely place of production is India, where unorthodox scripts abounded. A somewhat similar Qur'an in the Chester Beatty Library may also be of Indian origin. It is in a large, unsophisticated *muḥaqqaq* hand which is combined with illumination of very high quality.<sup>3</sup>

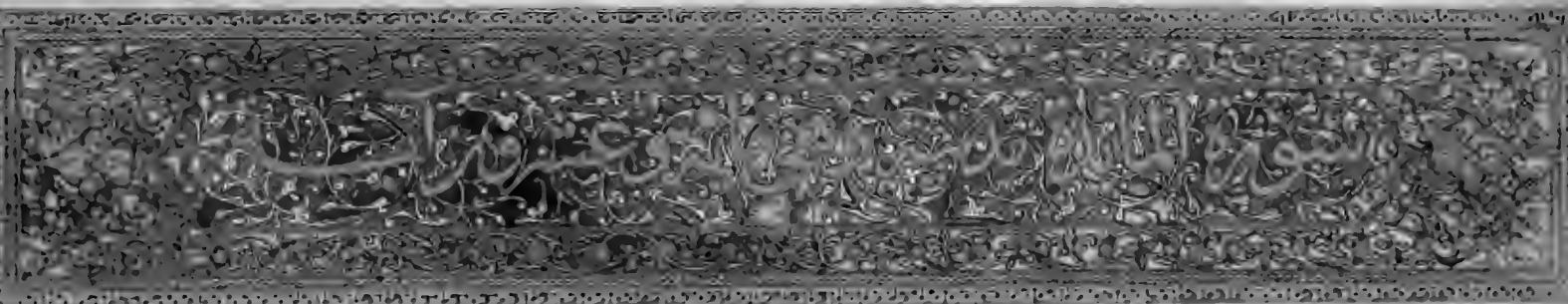
The first, fourth and seventh line on each page are in gold outlined in black, with the eyes of the letters painted in blue; the other four lines are in black. The gold paint used for the text is so thick in places that it resembles gold leaf, while the lapis lazuli used for the eyes of the letters is different from that used in the illumination and has proved more durable. The script has a squat appearance, for the height of the *alifs* and *lāms* is only two-thirds that of the same letters in normal forms of *muḥaqqaq*.<sup>4</sup> The text area is almost square in shape, and, although this is standard in Qur'ans from the Maghrib and is occasionally seen in copies produced in Anatolia, it is most unusual in the central Islamic lands and further east. The vocalization is in black. It is unlike that in most examples of monumental script, for it was written with the same pen as the lettering. As a result, the vocalization is as wide as the lettering and appears exaggerated. It should be noted that a large form of *naskh* with heavy vocalization occurs in later Indian Qur'ans.<sup>5</sup>

The two surah headings – that of *Sūrat al-mā'idah* on folio 51a, and that of *Sūrat al-an'ām* on folio 62b – are in gold *thulth* and have arabesque decoration which is comparable in quality to the finest Timurid examples. However, the arabesques are quite distinct types and not easily identifiable in Timurid, Ottoman or Indian work. On folio 51a a gold undulating line has tiny red-petalled flowers with green centres in mid-stem. From the centre of each undulation springs a stem with a three-petalled motif bearing two long leaves. Behind the surah heading there is a single line of white scrolls with red berries or dots in mid-stem. On folio 62b, the gold arabesque scrolls consist of an undulating line with three-petalled flowers from which spring long thin leaves. The pattern spreads out, right and left, from a central palmette. Behind the surah heading two parallel sets of white scrolls overlap. These bear three-petalled flowers with red centres in mid-stem.

Verses are marked by tiny rosettes in a different type of gold to that of the script, and a heavy gold border complemented by a thin blue line frames each page. The fragment has recently been restored after the pages had been cut down to the frame around the text. Like the so-called Baysunghur Qur'an, it may have had wide margins which were recycled at some stage in the past.

عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَالِكَ الْفَوْزُ  
الْعَظِيمُ \* اللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ  
الْأَرْضِ وَمَا فِيهِنَّ وَهُوَ  
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
تَضِلُّوا وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ  
أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا



هَلْ أَتَاكَ خَبْرٌ أَنَّهُ  
إِن أَمْرٌ هَلَكَ لَيْسَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَهُ

أُخْتُ فَلَهَا نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ وَهُوَ

يَرِثُهَا إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهَا وَلَدٌ

فَإِنْ كَانَتَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُمَا الشُّلُثَانِ

مِمَّا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا إِخْوَةً رِجَالًا

وَأُخَوَاتٍ فَإِلَى ذَٰلِكَ يَدْعُوا



PART II  
Qur'ans of the  
16th Century

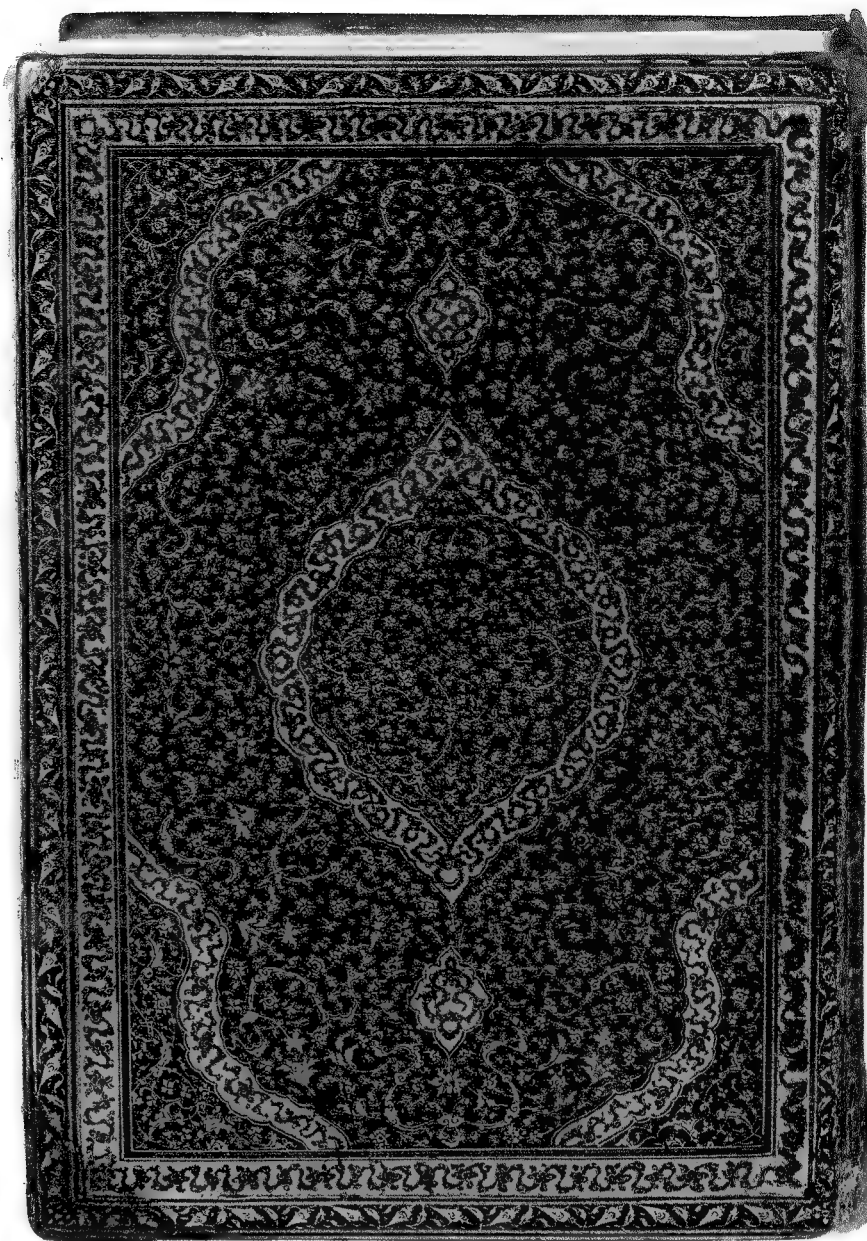
# Iran under the Early Safavids

At the turn of the 16th century a decisive change of political power took place in Iran, when forces loyal to the Safavid dynasty seized the Turkoman capital, Tabriz, and brought the entire country under their control. A form of Shi'ism was declared the only acceptable version of Islam, and it has remained the official religion of Iran ever since. At the battle of Chaldiran in 1514 the Safavids suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the Ottomans, who were able to capture Tabriz, but the Safavids' hold on the country was firm enough for them to weather this disaster. By the end of the century, they had recovered most of the territory lost to the Ottomans in earlier times; they had contained their troublesome Uzbek neighbours to the north; and they had stabilized their relations with the Mughals in the east. In the reign of Shah 'Abbas I (1589–1629), Iran became a major international power. At first, the new dynasty established its capital at Tabriz, but in 1548 the court was transferred to Qazvin, and in 1598 to Isfahan. New styles of manuscript illumination and illustration are associated with each of these moves, although the changes in illustration are easier to follow.

In the first decade of the century the Turkoman style of illumination, which had been in use in Tabriz and Shiraz over the previous 40 years, began to be replaced by a fusion of the Turkoman and Timurid styles that was to become characteristic of early Safavid manuscripts. By this time there was little difference between Qur'anic and secular illumination, but the study of the stylistic development of Qur'an decoration is complicated by the small number of manuscripts that have colophons or signed illumination. Even in the case of many copies of the finest quality, the calligraphy and the illumination are anonymous, there is no date nor any reference to the place where they were produced, and none contains any contemporary information concerning the patrons who commissioned them. The absence of colophons in this material has never been satisfactorily explained, and it is in complete contrast to the practice of the same artists when they worked on secular manuscripts, which were usually signed and dated. There was almost always space available for a colophon in these anonymous manuscripts, but it was generally filled with decoration, which, however simply executed, clearly took longer to produce than the writing of a colophon would have done. Most of these undocumented Qur'ans appear to have been produced in Shiraz, which was one of the two most important provincial centres for manuscript production during the 16th century, the other being Herat.

The lack of sufficient documentary evidence means that there are few artists employed in book production in this period whose careers can be traced with any certainty. One of the small number of exceptions is an outstanding scribe and illuminator called Ruzbihan Muhammad al-Tab'i al-Shirazi, who added his signature to a number of manuscripts, including two Qur'ans now in the Khalili Collection, cat. 39 and 40 below. Ruzbihan's known work as an illuminator occurs mostly in Qur'ans, but he also illuminated secular manuscripts, such as a fine copy of the *Kulliyāt* ('complete works') of Sa'di whose illumination bears his signature.<sup>1</sup> There is no reason why illuminators should have confined themselves to sacred works, and the artists who decorated the many contemporary copies of the *Khamsah* of Nizami and the *Shāhnāmah* of Firdawsi no doubt also worked on the illumination of Qur'ans. The handful of other Qur'an illuminators whose names are recorded include Mawlana Baba al-Tabrizi,<sup>2</sup> Nur al-Din Ahmad ibn Baha' al-Din 'Ali,<sup>3</sup> Muhammad ibn Taj al-Din Haydar Shirazi,<sup>4</sup> Nasir ibn Muhammad,<sup>5</sup> and Habiballah al-Katib al-Maraghi.<sup>6</sup>

The vast majority of 16th-century Qur'ans from Iran are single-volume copies. In many examples, each page of text is in a combination of large and small scripts, usually *thulth*,



30 outer cover

*muḥaqqaq* and *naskh*, arranged in panels. In others, only a fine large *naskh* or *muḥaqqaq* was employed. The Qur'anic text was often preceded by illuminated medallions bearing an appropriate quotation from the text of the Qur'an. These medallions were set into illumination, or they were surrounded by a border of blue spikes or fern-like finials. The opening surah was usually laid out across two pages; the text was often integrated into an all-embracing programme of decoration that covered both pages, or it was framed by an illuminated border. The first verses of *Sūrat al-baqarah* (II) was placed on the following page beneath an elaborate head-piece which almost always extends up to the top of the page. The text on this page was often written over a gold ground covered with scrolls.

In some manuscripts, the pages containing the beginning of *Sūrat al-kahf* (XVIII), which marks the beginning of the second half of the Qur'anic text, were also finely illuminated, and there are examples where illuminated borders have been set around the pages marking the beginning of each *juz'* (thirtieth part) of the text. During this period it also became customary to add a *du'ā-i khatm* and a *fālnāmah* at the end of the Qur'anic text. The *du'ā-i khatm* was a prayer to be read upon completing the text, while a *fālnāmah* was an aid to divination consisting of the letters of the Arabic alphabet presented in a table together with an explanation, usually in Persian, of the good or bad fortune associated with each letter. The prayer and the *fālnāmah* were often illuminated, as were the two final pages of Qur'anic text.

The work of both Herati and Shirazi artists is well represented in the Khalili Collection. One of the finest Qur'ans in the Collection, cat. 30 below, is of Herati origin. Its script in the style of Yaqut al-Musta'simi and the excellent illumination are surpassed only by its binding, which resembles those on two late 15th-century Herati manuscripts considered to be the earliest known examples of 'lacquered', that is painted and varnished, bindings. Another interesting manuscript, cat. 33 below, resembles a Qur'an of the same period in the Keir Collection and may have been made in Herat or Bukhara for a Shaybanid ruler.<sup>7</sup> The Collection's holdings of

manuscripts from Shiraz includes the two by Ruzbihan Muhammad, cat. 39 and 40. These belong to the small group of Shirazi Qur'ans that are properly documented, as does cat. 45, which was signed by Husayn al-Fakhkhar al-Shirazi and dated Shiraz, 1564-5.

A number of manuscripts in the Khalili Collection illustrate the close cultural connections between Mughal India and Safavid Iran. Cat. 43 below is clearly one of the finest Safavid Qur'ans of the 16th century and was probably produced in Shiraz for a royal patron. It bears various inscriptions that show that it was in the Mughal royal library from the second quarter of the 17th century onwards, and it may well have reached India as a diplomatic gift. An analysis of the inscriptions has also revealed that the manuscript was probably kept in the women's quarters of the Mughal imperial residence. Cat. 47 below is by a Shirazi calligrapher, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni, but 'Abd al-Qadir emigrated to Golconda, where he worked for members of the Qutbshahi dynasty at the end of the 16th century, and it is not impossible that this Qur'an was copied in Golconda. Cat. 48 below was probably copied in Iran in the 16th century but seems to have been partially repainted in India *circa* 1640, as the illumination on the opening and closing pages has parallels with illumination on album pages decorated for the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan at that time.

1. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Fraser 73; see Robinson 1958, p. 90. For Ruzbihan, see also pp. 144-9 below.  
2. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, MS. 1540, dated 1554; see Arberry 1967, cat. no. 153.

3. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, MS. EH 442, dated 1547; see Karatay 1962, cat. no. 425.  
4. Topkapı Palace Library, MS. EH 67, dated 1561-2, and MS. EH 48, of *circa* 1572-86; Karatay 1962,

cat. nos 434 and 509.  
5. Falk 1985, cat. no. 69, which is undated.  
6. Cat. 36 below.  
7. London, Keir Collection, MS. VII, 46.



30

## Single-volume Qur'an

Probably Herat, *circa* 1490–1510

240 folios, 17.5 × 12 cm, with

15 lines to the page

*Material* A cream paper, laid, with

8 lines to the centimetre

*Text area* 10 × 7 cm*Interlinear spacing* 0.8 cm*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in *riqā'* and Kufic*Binding* Contemporary*Accession no.* QUR323*Comparative items* Istanbul,

Topkapı Palace Library,

MS.EH1636; Istanbul, Museum of

Turkish & Islamic Arts, MS. 1905.<sup>1</sup>

1. Gray 1979, fig. 29 and pl. XIV.

2. Topkapı Palace Library,

MS.EH1636; see Gray 1979, fig. 29.

3. Museum of Turkish &amp; Islamic

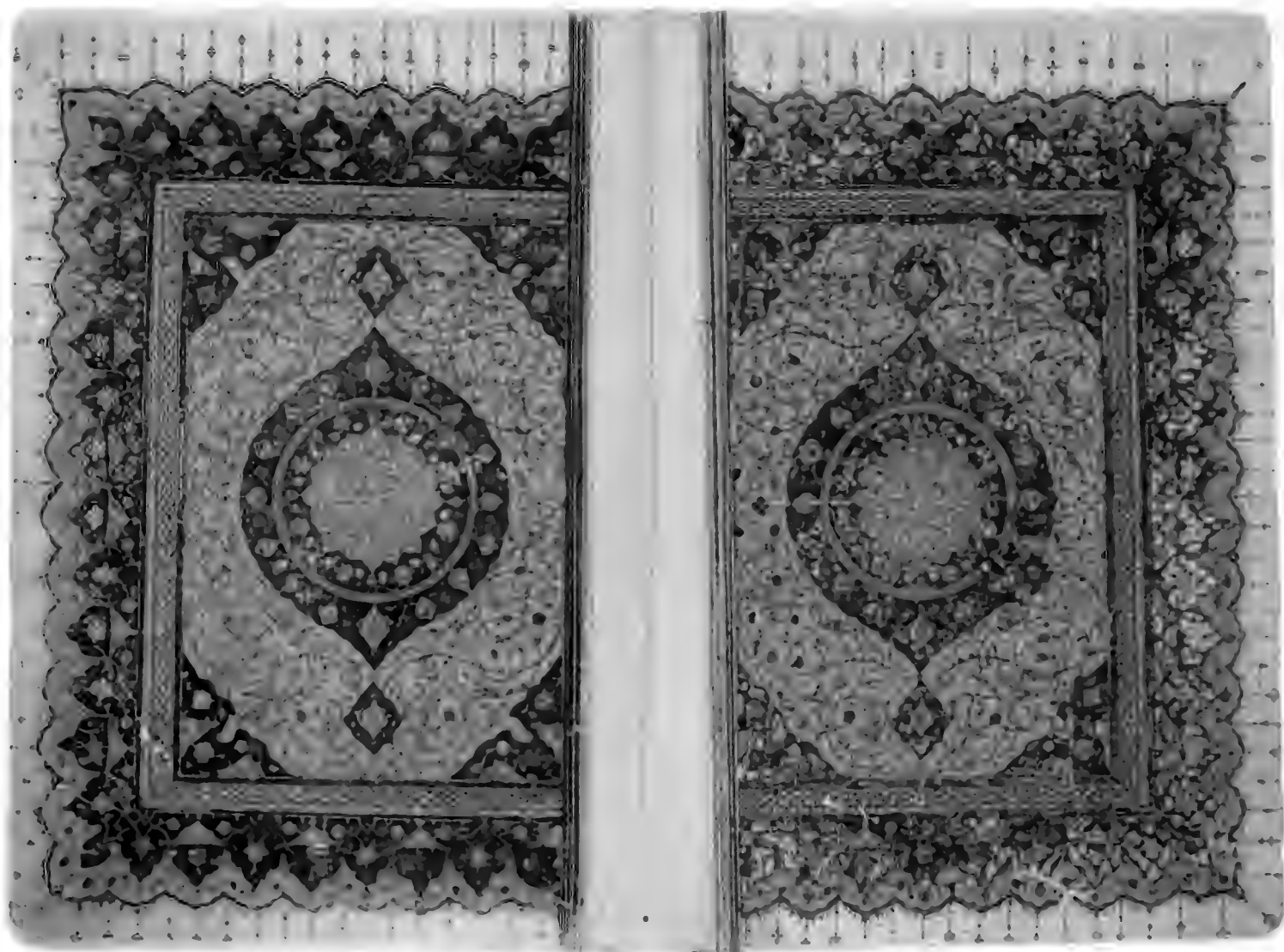
Arts; MS. 1905; see Gray 1979,

pl. XIV.

Although this manuscript is undated, it must have been produced at the end of the Timurid period, for, although its covers have been revarnished, they are one of the most important examples of very early 'lacquer' bindings. Their decoration, which is linked to that of the manuscript itself, is also similar to that of one of the earliest known 'lacquer' bindings, that on a copy of the *Dīvān* of Husayni dated 1492;<sup>2</sup> the repeating cloud-scroll motif used in the borders is identical. The doublures are of painted leather, with a small amount of filigree remaining in the pendants of the central medallion. The gold floral scrolls on a maroon background seen here are also found on the doublures of another early 'lacquer' binding, that of a copy of the *Maṣnavī* of Jalal al-Din Rumi dated 1483.<sup>3</sup> The outer border of the doublure of cat. 30, formed of flower chains in cartouches with intersecting quatrefoils, repeats almost exactly the border around the opening pages of text in the manuscript, which suggests that the illuminator was also the binder, or that the binder examined the illumination in the manuscript before decorating the doublures.

Cat. 30 opens with two illuminated medallions containing *Sūrat al-wāqī'ah* (LVI), verses 77–80. The medallions are set in panels covered with polychrome floral scrolls which end in large gold leaves. There is a strapwork inner border and an outer border made up of gold palmettes on a blue ground. The opening pages of text have illuminated panels above and below, while narrower panels flank the text on either side. This arrangement is framed by a border of polychrome flower chains in black cartouches alternating with green quatrefoils, and there is an outer border of reciprocal lappets. The text finishes on folio 240a with a small illuminated panel which contains confirmations of the verity of the Qur'an.

Surah headings are in gold *riqā'* and are set against deep blue panels with floral decoration. The script of the main text is a very fine small *naskh* in the style of Yaqut. Verses are marked by segmented circles in gold, and each page is framed by blue and gold rules around the text and an inner gold border which joins up with the panels enclosing the surah headings where these occur. Each tenth verse is marked by a circular medallion with scalloped edges bearing the word '*ashar*' ('ten') in white Kufic.



30 folios 2b-3a



30 folios 3b-4a

31

## Single-volume Qur'an

Herat or Tabriz, *circa* 1500–1550

637 folios, 32 × 20.6 cm, with  
9 lines to the page

*Material* The text is on a  
cream paper with no visible details;  
the margins are of a cream paper,  
laid, with 10 lines  
to the centimetre

*Text area* 16.2 × 9.4 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1.9 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in *riqā'*

*Binding* 16th century

*Accession no.* QUR56

*Published* Christie's 1989,  
lot no. 316

This is a fine Herati Qur'an from the second half of the 15th century, although it is unsigned and undated. The script is an excellent *naskh* with verses marked by knotted gold rosettes. Each fifth and tenth verse is indicated by marginal medallions which are identical, except that the border of the marker for groups of five verses comes to a point at the top. Surah headings are in white *riqā'* and are set within panels filled with delicate ornament of different kinds. The margins are ruled in gold. The opening and closing folios are fully illuminated in a Herati style. There are floral sprays between the lines of text, and the knotted rosettes are outlined in blue and pricked.

The covers have central medallions and corner-pieces brushed with two colours of gold and decorated with cloud scrolls and floral arabesques whose blossoms are painted blue. The main field and the surrounding border of cartouches and quatrefoils are decorated in the same manner. The doublures have painted filigree panels and gilt cartouche and quatrefoil borders.

32

## Single-volume Qur'an

Herat, AH967/AD 1559–60

390 folios, 26 × 16 cm, with  
12 lines to the page

*Material* A buff paper with  
inclusions, laid, with an  
indeterminate number of lines  
per centimetre

*Text area* 15.75 × 8.8 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1.4 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh,  
and incidentals in *riqā'* and Kufic

*Scribe* Ahmad ibn Ni'matallah

*Documentation* A colophon and a  
note on the readings

*Binding* Contemporary

*Accession no.* QUR3

*Comparative items* Cat. 33;  
and London, British Library,  
OR. MS. 13,087;<sup>1</sup> and a MS. in New  
York Public Library recorded in  
Bayani 1345–58, IV, no. 63

This manuscript opens with a double page of illumination in a good Herati style. Surah headings are in white *riqā'* on gold, and verses are separated by roundels of strapwork. On folio 1a there is a large, illegible seal impression and a note dated AH 1008/AD 1599 by Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Haqq al-Sunbati al-Muqri' which states that the manuscript was vocalized according to the reading of 'Asim. Another manuscript by the same calligrapher dated 1583 is in the New York Public Library.

The black morocco covers have stamped panels of gilt leather overlay. The central field is also gilt and is decorated with floral motifs. The doublures are of red morocco and have medallions and pendants with gold filigree decoration.

1. Lings & Safadi 1976, cat. no. 138.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْمَ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ

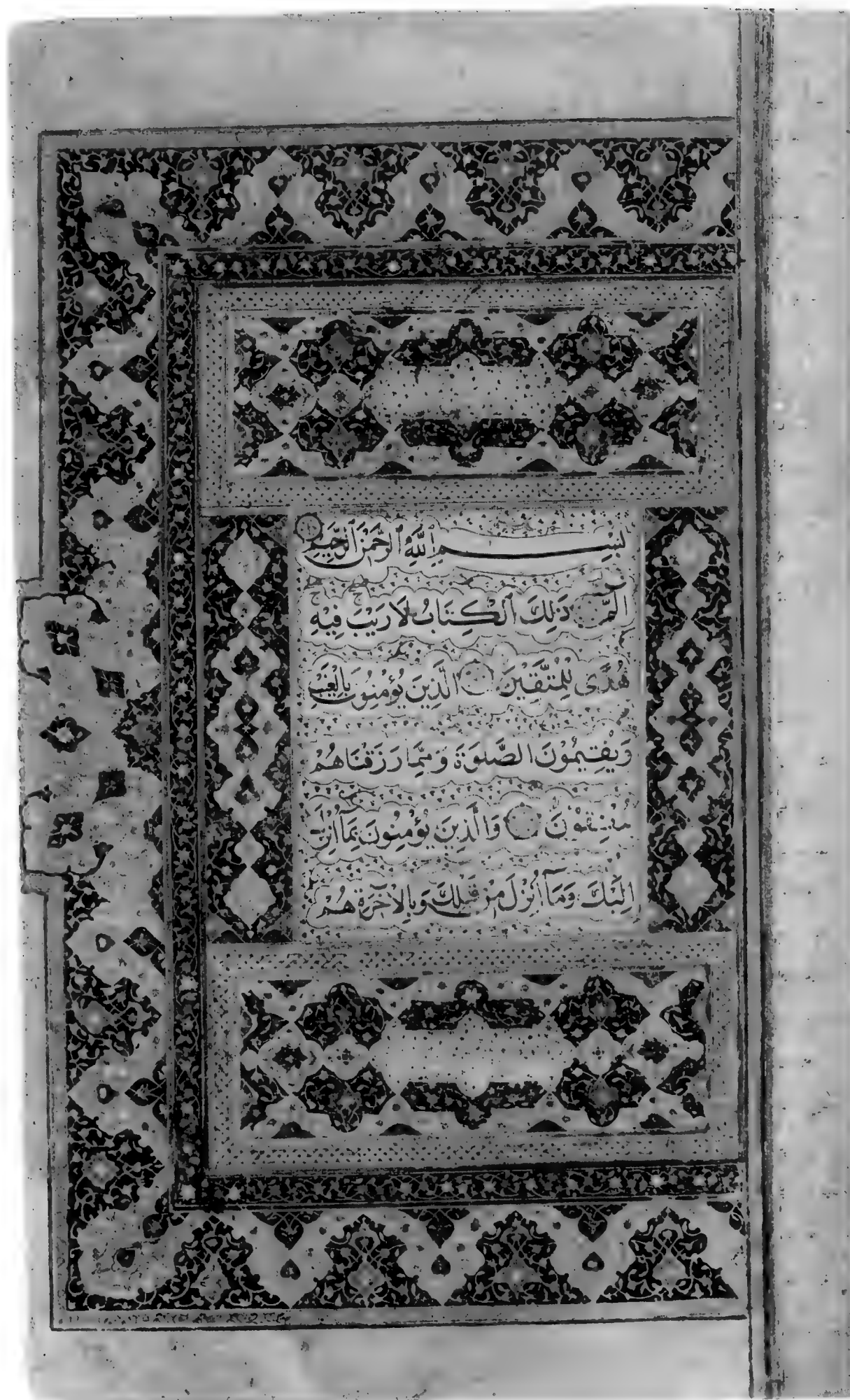
هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ

وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ

يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ

إِلَيْكَ وَمِمَّا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ







بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ  
إِلهِنا الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ  
صِرَاطِ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ  
غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوْحِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَمْرِ الْقُرْآنِ  
 أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ  
 الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا أَفَلَا  
 تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ حَتَّى إِذَا اسْتَيْسَسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ  
 قَدْ كُذِّبُوا جَاءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا فَنُفِخَ بِالسَّاعُوتِ وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ  
 سَاقُوا لَكُمْ عَنْ الْقَوْمِ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي  
 الْأَلْبَابِ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَى وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقًا لِلَّذِي  
 بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 الْمُرْتَلِكِ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكِتَابُ وَالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ  
 الْحَقُّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي فَتَحَ

أَحْكَمَ ۖ رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ نَأْوِيلِ  
الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَلِيِّ الْإِنْسَانِ  
فَالْآخِرَةُ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَحَقَّنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ ۖ ذَلِكَ  
مِنْ نِعَمِكَ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتُ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ  
اجْتَمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُونَ ۖ وَمَا أَكْثَرَ النَّاسَ  
وَلَوْ حَضَرْتُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَمَا سَأَلْتَهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ فَمَنْ  
الَّذِينَ كُذِّبُوا لِلْعَالَمِينَ ۖ وَكَأَنَّ مِرْيَةً فِي السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ يَمْرُونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ ۖ وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ  
أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ ۖ أَفَأَمِنُوا أَنْ نَأْتِيَهُمْ  
غَاشِيَةٌ مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ أَوْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ  
لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۖ قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ  
أَنَا وَمَنْ تَتَّبَعُنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

## 33

## Single-volume Qur'an

Bukhara or Herat, AH944/AD 1537-8

318 folios, 22.5 × 14.5 cm, with  
14 lines to the page  
*Material* A thin, well-polished  
cream paper, laid, with 5 lines to  
the centimetre

*Text area* 13.5 × 7 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in riqā' and Kufic

*Scribe* (Nur al-Din) Muhammad  
Husayn ibn Muhyi ('l-Din)  
al-Harawi

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Ottoman, 16th or  
17th century

*Accession no.* QUR114

*Comparative items* London, Keir  
Collection, MS. VII.46;<sup>1</sup> Sotheby's  
1987, lot no. 235; and two items  
recorded in Bayani 1345-58, IV,  
no. 490

1. Robinson and others 1976, p. 293.

2. MS. HS 323; see Karatay 1962,  
cat. no. 366.

3. This is in the Museum of Ancient  
Iran, Tehran, but the shelfmark was  
not recorded by Bayani.

4. Keir Collection, MS. VII.46.

5. Bayani, *loc. cit.*

6. The same style can be seen in  
cat. 32 above and in London,  
British Library, OR. MS. 13,087  
(Lings & Safadi 1976, cat. no. 138),  
which were both made in Herat  
about a decade later.

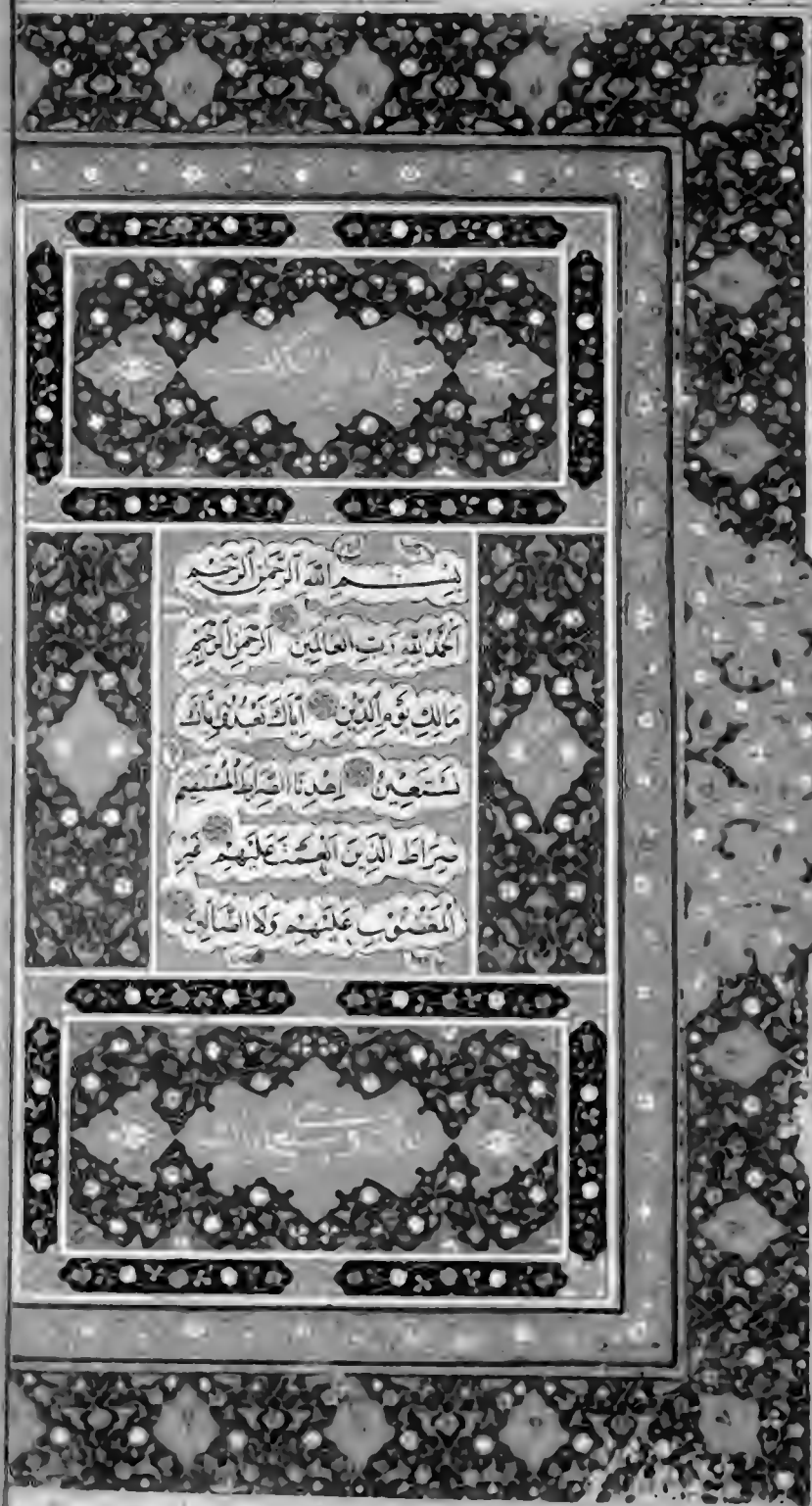
7. See Schmitz 1990, p. 527.

Muhammad Husayn ibn Muhyi al-Harawi worked in Herat and Bukhara and was probably the son of the Muhyi ibn Hasan al-Harawi al-Khurasani who copied a single-volume Qur'an dated 1466 that is now in the Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul.<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Husayn's work is also known from four other examples: a Qur'an dated 1537-8;<sup>3</sup> a Qur'an copied in 1545 for 'Abd al-'Aziz Khan of Bukhara (*reg* 1540-9);<sup>4</sup> an undated Qur'an sold at Sotheby's in 1987; and an undated piece of calligraphy in a private collection in Tehran.<sup>5</sup> The illumination in cat. 33, in the Qur'an made for 'Abd al-'Aziz Khan, and in the Qur'an sold at Sotheby's is in a style current in Herat in the 16th century.<sup>6</sup> The design is identical in all three cases, and this suggests that the manuscripts were all illuminated by the calligrapher, or that they were all illuminated in the royal library at Bukhara, where the Herati style was also used at this time.<sup>7</sup>

The opening pages of cat. 33 are finely illuminated, but they were evidently left unfinished, as the details in red and green have not been painted in on folio 2a. Within the panels above and below the text there are lobed cartouches in gold which bear the surah headings and verse counts. The cartouches are set against blue and red grounds covered with floral arabesques, and the panels have a border of chains of flowers in black cartouches, which alternate with pale blue quatrefoils. The narrower panels that flank the text on either side have floral arabesques over a blue ground. There is an inner border of rotating arabesques on a gold ground, a wide outer border of blue, and gold hasps in the outer margins. The text on these pages is written within cloud cartouches on gold.

Surah headings are in white and are set against illuminated panels. Verses are punctuated by illuminated discs, and the text on each page is framed by a border of blue and gold rules and an inner border in gold which incorporates surah headings where these occur. The conclusion of each group of five and ten verses is marked in the margin by a circular medallion with scrolled borders bearing a number in coloured Kufic. *Juz'* and *hizb* divisions are indicated by a lobed lozenge or half-lozenge. Folios 315b-318b contain a prayer to be read upon completing the Qur'anic text.

The brown morocco covers have stamped central medallions and corner-pieces of gilt leather overlay. The doublures are of red morocco and have central embossed medallions within a diamond.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
أَمَّا اللَّهُ آتِ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ  
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ أَمَّا أَنْ تَبْعُدُوا  
لَسْتُمْ بِعَيْنٍ أَصْدَأَ الْعَيْنِ الْمُسْلِمِ  
مِرَاكِبِ الدِّينِ أَمْسِكُوا عَلَيْهِمْ قَبْرًا  
الْعُسْفُوفِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ



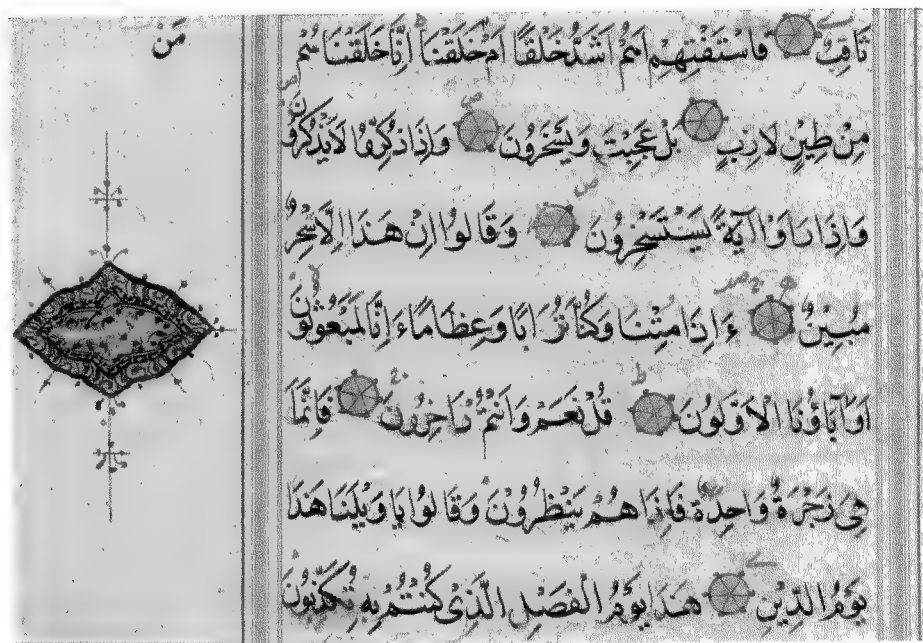
## 34

## Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, 16th century

383 folios, 21.5 × 13.5 cm, with  
12 lines to the page  
*Material* A cream paper, laid, with  
5 lines to the centimetre  
*Text area* 14.4 × 7.6 cm  
*Interlinear spacing* 1 cm  
*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in *riqā'* and *thulth*  
*Binding* Probably contemporary  
*Accession no.* QURI 30  
*Comparative item* Khalili  
Collection, MS. 117

The *naskh* hand of this manuscript has several peculiarities: *alif* and *lām* are written without a *tarwīṣah*; when *alif* was written separately, it often bends to the left at the base; and when it comes at the end of a combination of letters it bends at the top to the right. None of these features appear in the colophon, which is in the name of the famous Herati calligrapher 'Abdallah al-Tabbakh and gives a 15th-century date. A 15th-century prayer-book in the Khalili Collection, MS. 117, is almost certainly a genuine example of this calligrapher's hand and

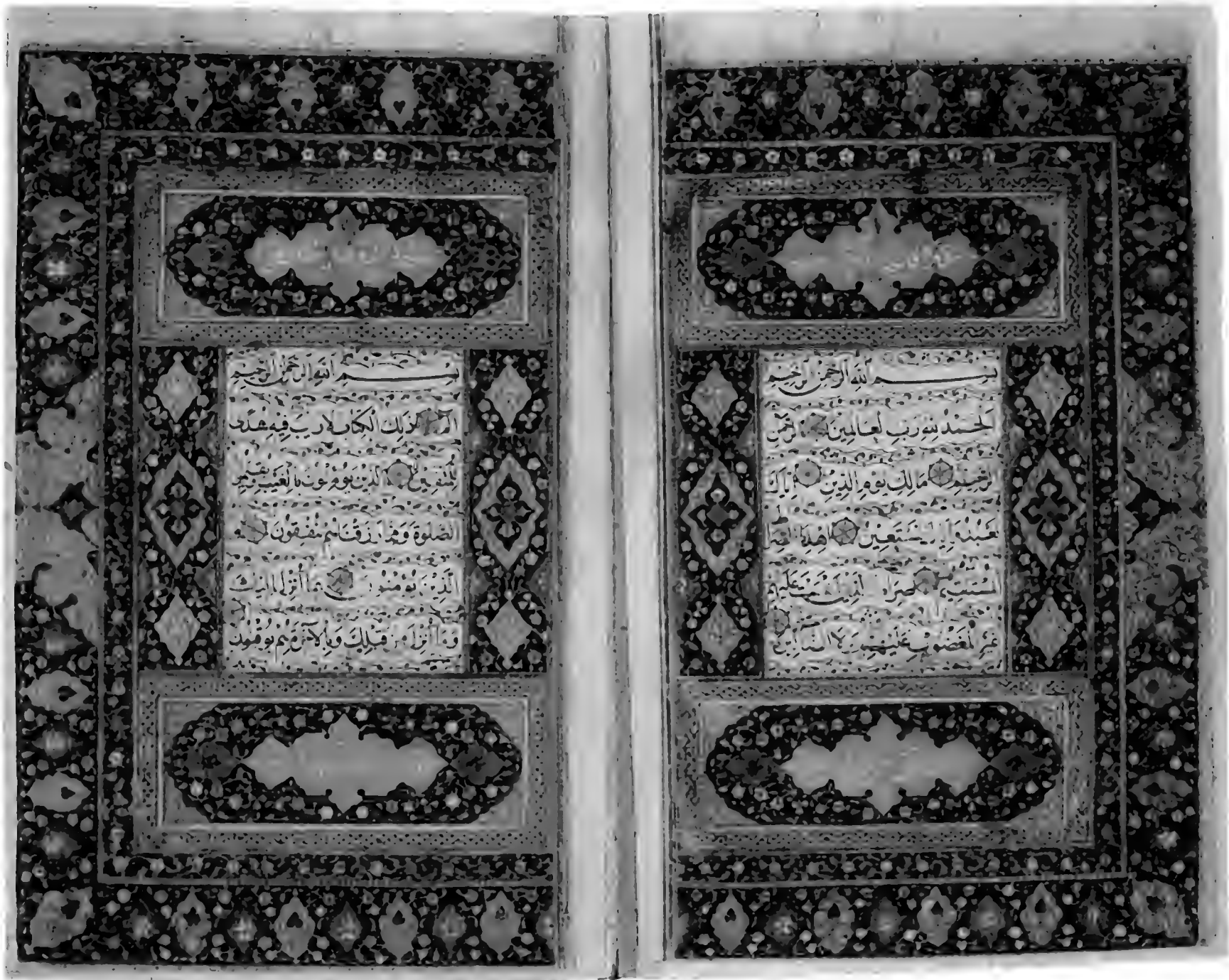


\*34 folio 279 (detail)

displays none of the peculiarities of the script of cat. 34. In addition, there is no difference between the hand of the text and that of the colophon, and the illumination is in a 15th-century Herati style. Cat. 34, on the other hand, is clearly Safavid in origin, and it shows what could be proffered as the work of a great 15th-century master only a century after his death.

The opening pages of text are illuminated in a 16th-century Safavid style, as are the panels around the colophon on folio 383b. Surah headings are in white *riqā'* and are set against illuminated panels. The margins are ruled in blue and gold throughout, and verses are separated by gold discs with red and blue dots. Groups of five and ten verses are not marked, but rather unusual marginal ornaments in the form of polychrome petalled lozenges indicate *juz'* and *hizb* divisions of the text, and half-lozenges mark smaller divisions.

The black morocco covers have stamped central medallions, corner-pieces and border panels in gilt leather overlay. The brown morocco doublures also have stamped central medallions, corner-pieces and border panels, but of coloured leather overlay.



## 35

## Single-volume Qur'an

Herat or Tabriz, *circa* 1525–1550

454 folios, 36 × 24.5 cm, with  
11 lines to the page

*Material* The main body of the manuscript is made of a polished cream paper, laid, with 6 lines to the centimetre. The end papers are of 19th-century European origin; one bears an eagle watermark and the initials G.F.A., while the other is Russian and is dated 1853

*Text area* 22 × 14.2 cm

*Interlinear measurement* 1.5 cm

*Script* The main text in a combination of muḥaqqaq, naskh and thulth, incidentals in thulth and Kufic

*Binding* Contemporary, with later Ottoman doublures

*Accession no.* QUR251

*Comparative items* cat. 33; London, British Library, OR.MS.13,087;<sup>1</sup> Washington, DC, Sackler Gallery, MS.S86.007–8;<sup>2</sup> and Christie's 1990, lot no. 56

1. Lings & Safadi 1976, cat. no. 138.

2. Lowry & Nemazee 1988, cat. no. 37.

3. Reproduced in Rado 1984, p. 72.

The text of this Qur'an is complete, but it is clear that the final pages of the manuscript are missing, for Iranian Qur'ans of this date always ended with a *fālnāmah*, a prayer, or an invocation, and sometimes all three. The last 25 folios are severely stained, and the water which caused this damage may well have destroyed the missing pages and the original binding, as it was the local practice of storing manuscripts flat on a shelf or on the ground, and water could have soaked into the book from beneath for some time before being noticed.

An inscription in the name of Ahmed Karahisarî has been added in the left-hand corner of the last page. The inscription is dated AH944/AD 1537–8 and seems to have been based on the calligrapher's signature on a well-known album page,<sup>3</sup> but it may have been added sometime ago as the ink looks old and cracked. Although it is not in the hand of Ahmed Karahisarî, and its illumination is not Ottoman, this fine manuscript was certainly produced in the great calligrapher's lifetime and has the innovative, even slightly eccentric, touch found in his work. The person who added the inscription may therefore have genuinely believed that the Qur'an was in the hand of the great master. Such an attribution would suggest that the manuscript was in Turkey for some time, and this is confirmed by the binding, which has been restored in the Ottoman style. The date 1853 appears in the watermark in one of the end papers, and this must be the approximate date of the restoration work.

The illumination of cat. 35, which is confined to marginal devices marking groups of five and ten verses and the opening pages of text, is in the style current in Herat and Tabriz in the second quarter of the 16th century. The marginal ornaments consist of medallions containing the word *khams* ('five') or *ashar* ('ten') written in Kufic over an arabesque scroll. There is an inner coloured border and an outer gold border decorated with leaf and petal motifs until folio 243, where they cease. These ornaments are identical to those in cat. 33, which was copied in 1537–8 by Muhammad Husayn ibn Muhyi al-Harawi in Herat or Bukhara, and the illumination on the opening pages is in the same style. On the other hand, the frontispiece to a copy of the *Dīvān* of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi apparently made for Bahram Mirza in Tabriz in the 1530s also shows strong similarities with cat. 35. A more curious resemblance is that between cat. 35 and a Qur'an that appeared in Christie's London saleroom in 1990. This manuscript, which is complete, was produced in Herat at about the same date as cat. 35 and bears the signature of Karahisarî's teacher, Asadallah Kirmani. The signature cannot be genuine, as Asadallah died in 1486. The manuscript bears a 16th-century Ottoman *waqfiyyah* in the name of a daughter of Rüstem Paşa, which shows that it must have been in Istanbul soon after its completion.

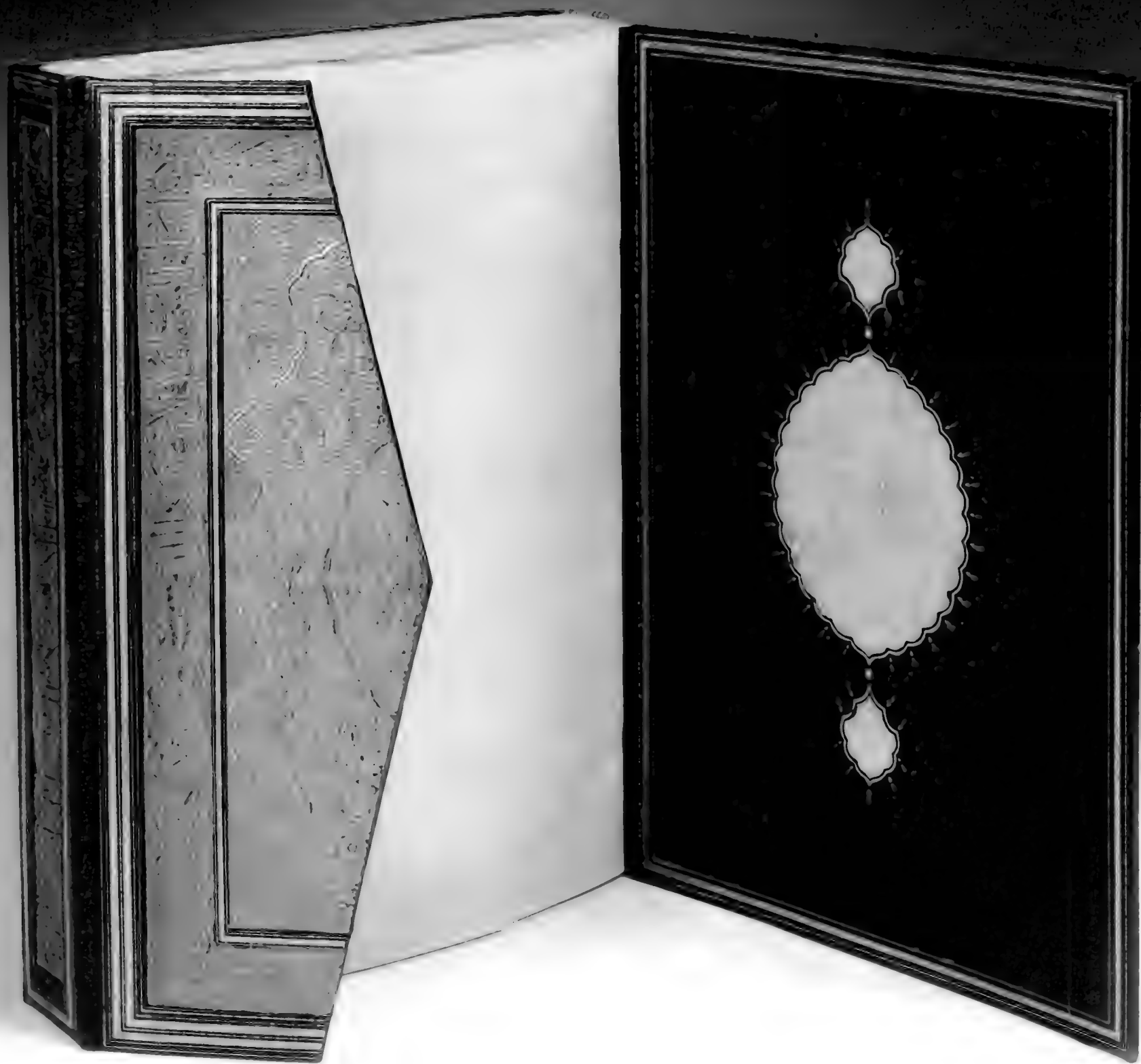
Each page of the text of cat. 35 is laid out in five panels surrounded



by gold and blue rules. The top and bottom panels contain a single line of *muḥaqqaq*, the central panel contains one line of *thulth*, and the remaining two contain four lines of *naskh*. The calligraphy in all three scripts is of the highest quality. The final forms of *bā'*, *tā'*, *thā'*, *fā'* and *kāf* in the *naskh* script are often greatly extended, an unusual feature at this time. The final forms of the *nūn*, *sīn*, *shīn* and similar letters, on the other hand, are almost never extended. Verses are separated by gold knots, and surah headings are in two sizes of gold *thulth*. A large and magnificent variety with blue vocalization was employed if the heading fell in one of the three single-line panels; and a smaller type was used if the heading fell in the midst of the text in *naskh*. The loops in the letters were decorated in three ways: they were filled in with black; they were given eccentric dots which look like pupils; or a tiny palmette frond was added.

The restored binding is 16th-century but may not have been the original cover of this Qur'an. The outer covers have central medallions with pendants, and corner-pieces. The main fields are filled with cloud scrolls and arabesques, and the borders contain the Throne Verse (II, 255), while the fore-edge flap is inscribed with verse 79 of *Sūrat al-wāqī'ah* (LVI). All these elements have been brushed with gold, and the covers have been attached to a fine doublure decorated with a *saz* leaf and rose design. As it is unlikely that a Qur'an in poor condition would have been brought from Iran to Istanbul, the manuscript probably suffered damage while in Ottoman hands and was repaired soon afterwards.







بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الحمد لله رب العالمين  
والمؤمنين والمؤمنات  
الست

والمؤمنين والمؤمنات  
الست

مَدِينَةِ الْقُرْطُ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ  
عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالصَّافَاتِ صِينًا فَالْزَّاجِرَاتِ زَجْرًا فَالتَّالِيَاتِ ذِكْرًا  
إِنَّ إِلَهُكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا  
وَرَبُّ الْمَشَارِقِ إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِنُجُومٍ الْكَوَكِبِ  
وَحِفْظًا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَارِدٍ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ لَهَا لَئِنْ أَمَرْنَا

وَفِي زُفُوفٍ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ دُجُورًا

لَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَلَقَدْ لَعْنَتْنَا نَحْنُ وَجِبْرِيلُ مَا تَلَا مِنْهَا  
شَيْئًا تَأْوِيلًا فَاسْتَفْهِمُوا مِمَّا شَدَّخَفْنَا مِنْ خَلْقِنَا إِنَّا  
خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ لَا ذَرِيَّةَ لَكُمْ تَعْتَبُونَ وَنَسُوهُنَّ  
وَأَذْكُرُوا الْآيَاتِ كُفُورًا وَذَرَوْا آيَةَ يُنْسَخُونَ

وَقَالُوا ازْهِقْ هَذَا السَّحَابَ مَبِينًا لَنَا



يَنْصُرُونَ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُمُ

خَافَتُهُمْ فَلَا يَحِزُّونَ قَوْلَهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ لَمَّا يَنْصُرُونَ وَمَا عَلِمُوا  
وَلَمْ يَرَوْا لَأَنَّهُمْ لَخُلَفَاءُ مِنْ طُفَّةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ  
ثُمَّ لَنَا مِثْلُ وَلِيِّ حَلْفَةٍ قَالَ مِنْ خِلَالِ الْعُتَمَاءِ وَهُوَ  
رَبُّهُمْ فَوَيْحًا لِلَّذِينَ اتَّكَمُوا مِنْ هُوْرٍ كَانُوا عَلَى عِلْمٍ

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا

فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ وَفُورُونَ وَلَيْسَ لِلَّذِينَ خَلَوْا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ بِقَادِرِينَ عَلَى أَنْ يَخْلُقُ مِثْلَهُمْ بَلْ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ  
لَمَّا مَنِعَ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ فَبِمَا  
كَذَّبْتُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْكُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا وَلِهَذَا جَعَلْنَا

سُورَةَ الصَّافَاتِ لِشَاوِثِ مَا نَزَّلْنَاهُ



## Single-volume Qur'an

Herat or Maraghah, circa 1560–1570

480 folios, 24.5 × 17 cm, with  
11 lines to the page

*Material* A thin cream paper, laid,  
with 5 lines to the centimetre

*Text area* 15.2 × 9 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 0.8 cm

*Script* The main text in a  
combination of muḥaqqaq, thulth  
and naskh, incidentals in thulth

*Scribe* Habiballah al-Katib  
al-Maraghi

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Modern

*Accession no.* QUR178

*Comparative item* Istanbul,  
Topkapı Palace Library, MS.K 106.<sup>1</sup>

1. Karatay 1962, cat.no. 533.

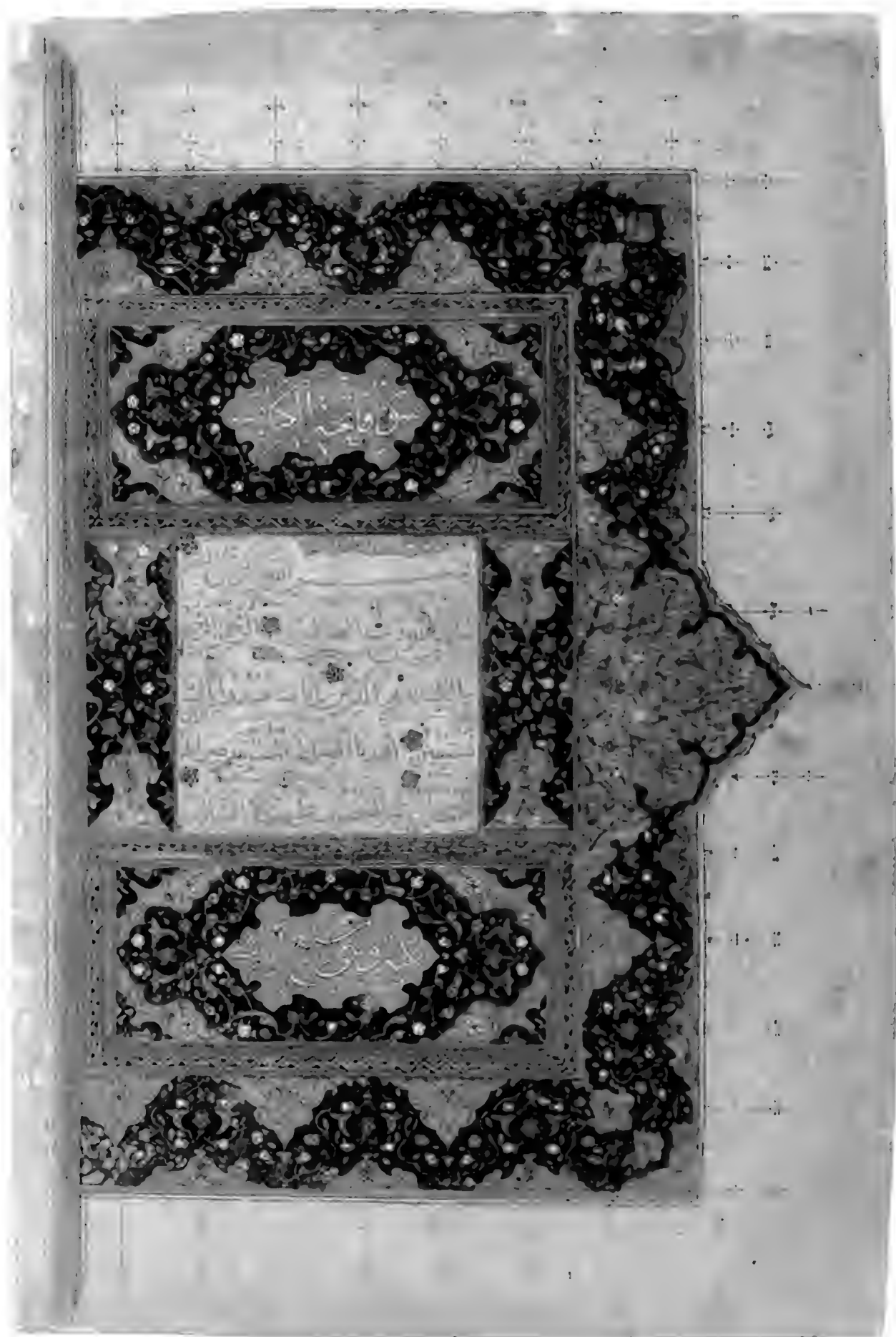
2. Topkapı Palace Library,  
MS.K 106.

According to the colophon, Habiballah al-Katib al-Maraghi was both the scribe and illuminator of this Qur'an, but neither the date nor the place of production is given. The manuscript was probably made in Herat in the second half of the 16th century, but it may also have been made in Maraghah. One other undated Qur'an by the same scribe is known.<sup>2</sup>

The opening pages are competently, if simply, illuminated in a Herati style. The most interesting part is the outer border of reciprocal lappets defined by a fine vermilion line and containing gold palmettes with alternate black or gold centres. At the middle of each vertical margin there is a triangular hasp filled with palmettes and half of an eight-pointed star. The script used on these pages is gold *naskh*.

In the rest of the manuscript, each page is divided into five panels, with a different style of script in each panel. The first and last lines are in blue *muḥaqqaq*; the middle line, the sixth, is in gold *thulth*; and the remaining lines are in black *naskh*. For the first and last few pages (folios 2b–19b and 462b–480b), the side panels are filled with simple ornaments. Surah headings are in gold *thulth* and are set within illuminated panels. There are orange, green, gold and blue rules around the text. Verse-markers consist of segmented circles in gold, and each group of five and ten verses is marked in the margin by floral sprays within gold circles, which are pointed in the case of the markers for groups of five verses. The *juz'* and *hizb* divisions of the text are noted in the margins.

The scribe appears to have been rather careless in his initial calculations. There are numerous occasions in the first 40 pages where he has had to add words and even entire verses that he missed out when he first copied out the text. This was likely to happen when manuscripts were written in different pens or in two stages.



عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ سَيِّدِي أَنْتَ

ذَاتُ لَحَبٍ وَأَمْرُهُ حَمَالَةٌ لِحَطَبٍ فِي جَنَدٍ مَا جَلَّ بِنَسَبٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا



تَعْبُدُونَ وَلَا أَنتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا يَعْبُدُ

وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا أَنتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا عَابَدُكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَدِينِي

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَحَاجُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالْفَقِيرِ وَالْمُسْتَغْنَى

يَخْلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ قَوَامًا قِيَمَ حَيْدَرِكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرُكَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَابًا

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

تَبَتَّ إِلَيَّ لَهْبٌ وَتَبَّتْ مَا أَغْنَى



# 37

## Single-volume Qur'an

Herat, circa 1560–1575

718 folios, 32.5 × 23.5 cm, with 9 lines to the page

*Material* A thin, polished buff paper, tightly laid, with an indeterminate number of lines per centimetre

*Text area* 20.5 × 11.5 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 2.5 cm

*Script* Thulth verging on *tawqī*

*Scribe* 'Abd al-Jabbar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Contemporary

*Accession no.* QUR198

*Comparative items* Dublin,

Chester Beatty Library, MS. 1540;<sup>1</sup>

and Mashhad, Astan-i Quds

Library, Qur'an MS. 119.<sup>2</sup>

The script of this manuscript – a variety of *thulth* verging on *tawqī* – is a most unusual type for use for the Qur'anic text. The two other known examples are Qur'ans by Maqsud 'Ali Sharif Tabrizi, one dated Tabriz, 1554, and the other dated 1566.<sup>3</sup>

The only illumination in the manuscript is found in the borders of the opening pages of text. The heading and the *basmalah* of each surah are written in gold and set within two panels. Verse-markers are in the form of gold roundels decorated with red and blue dots. The margins are ruled in orange, green, blue and gold throughout.

The main field of the black morocco covers is covered in floral and cloud-band motifs. In the outer borders there are Prophetic *ḥadīths*, which proclaim the virtues of reading the Qur'an. Both the main field and the borders have been brushed with gold. The doublures have brown morocco medallions and corner-pieces of filigree on coloured grounds.<sup>4</sup>

1. Arberry 1967, cat.no. 153; James 1980, cat no. 64.

2. Ma'ani 1347, cat.no. 92.

3. Chester Beatty Library, MS. 1540; and Astan-i Quds Library, Qur'an MS. 119.

4. For the binding, see Falk 1985, cat no. 79.





سُورَةُ الْفُرْقَانِ مِائَتَا آيَةً نَزَّلَهَا نَزْلًا  
مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَى  
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ  
الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ  
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ  
قَبْلِكَ وَالْآخِرَةُ هُمْ يوقِفُونَ أُولَئِكَ

# Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, circa 1525–1550

375 folios, 16.8 × 9.5 cm, with  
14 lines to the page

*Material* The text is on a gold-  
sprinkled, dark cream paper,  
probably wove; the margins are of a  
cream paper, laid, with 7–8 lines to  
the centimetre

*Text area* 10.5 × 5.5 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 0.8 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in thulth

*Binding* Ottoman, 16th century

*Accession no.* QUR292

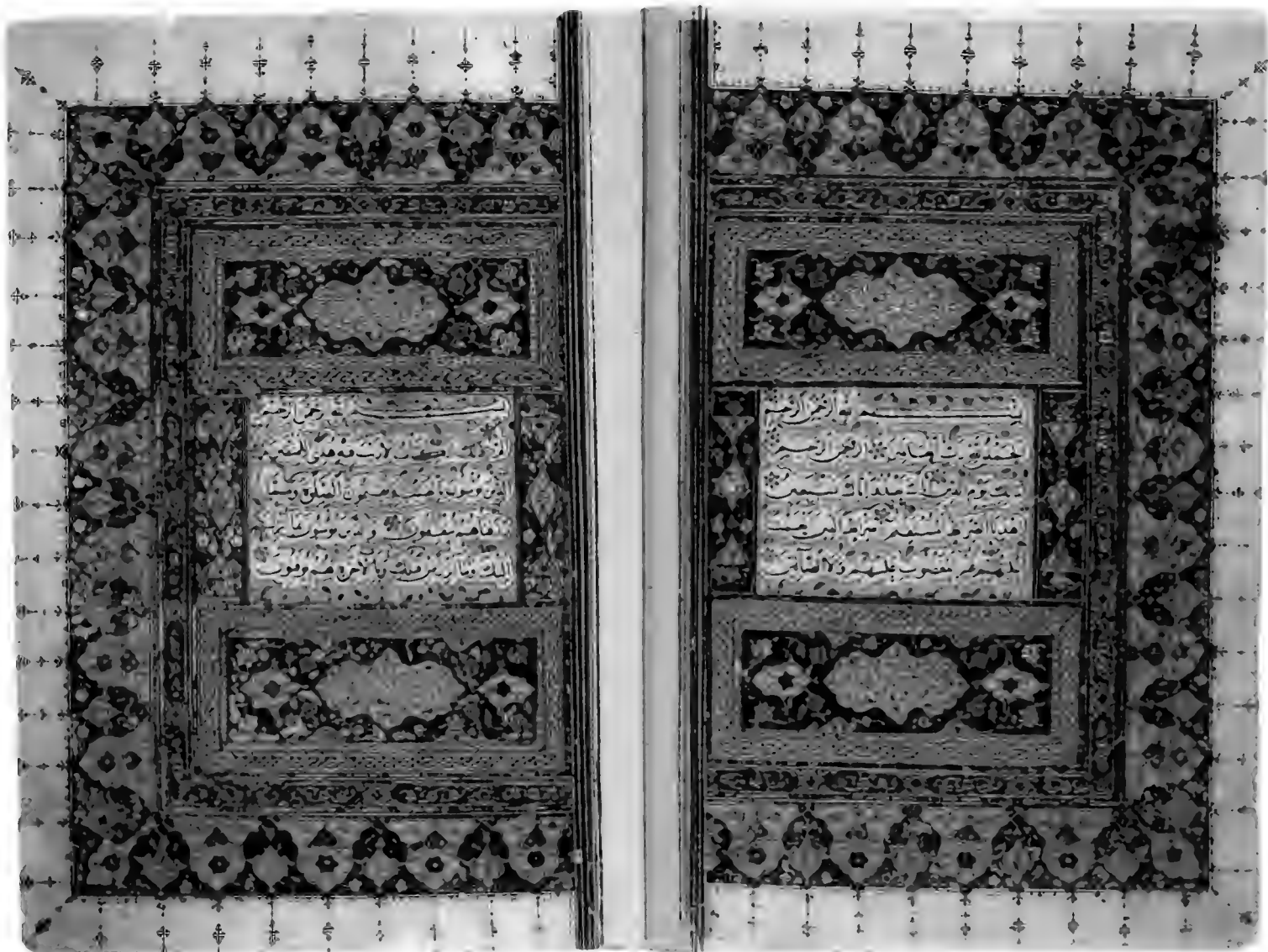
*Comparative Item* Cat. 13 in  
volume II of this catalogue

The script used in this Qur'an is a form of *naskh* usually associated with Yaqut al-Musta'simi, but there are no inscriptions attributing the manuscript to Yaqut, and there are no indications that it was produced as a facsimile of Yaqut's hand. The first folio appears to be missing, and this may have borne inscriptions giving this information. The hand is certainly very fine and looks archaic, but the surah headings are in an early 16th-century style, and there are no traces of any older headings under the paint.

On the first page there is a fine medallion containing the second half of verse 88 of *Sūrat al-isrā'* (xvii). There may have been a companion page, but this is now missing. There are some damaged seal impressions, which may be of Indian origin, on the same page, and the remains of a pseudo-Kufic inscription on folio 1a. The opening pages of text are fully illuminated in a 16th-century style. This decoration is of excellent quality, although it is very worn and damaged. The manuscript closes with an equally fine pair of illuminated pages containing a prayer.

The manuscript was remargined in the 16th century, and the paper has been sprinkled with gold. Verses are punctuated by segmented gold discs. Groups of five and ten verses are indicated by marginal ornaments, and the marker for each group of ten verses is accompanied by a red letter *'ayn* (for *'ashar*, 'ten'), which was probably added in India. Other textual divisions are noted in red and gold.

The black morocco covers have central medallions and corner-pieces of gilt leather overlay. 'Lacquer' decoration consisting of red arabesques has been applied over the gilding.



38 folios 33b-34a



38 folios 171b-172a

# Ruzbihan Muhammad of Shiraz

A Master Calligrapher and Illuminator

The Iranian city of Shiraz was an important centre of book illustration from at least the second quarter of the 14th century, but it seems to have reached the peak of its production between 1490 and 1520. In the second half of the 15th century illustrated manuscripts began to be turned out in such quantities that the so-called Commercial Turkoman style of painting was evolved to keep pace with demand.<sup>1</sup> The paintings in this style often appear to have been produced rather mechanically, with stock backgrounds, simplified compositions and repetitive figure poses, but some products of this period are of considerable charm and competence. The Commercial Turkoman style continued to be employed by the painters of Shiraz into the early 16th century, when it was replaced by a Safavid commercial style, which lasted from about 1520 to 1580.<sup>2</sup> No large-scale influx of painters into Shiraz is needed to explain the appearance of this new style, for production techniques did not change, and both the old and the new style were employed by succeeding generations of painters from the same families. The Turkoman style simply seems to have gone out of fashion, as Shirazi painters responded to the demand for books illustrated in the same manner as those produced for the affluent elites of Tabriz and Qazvin. Commercial Shirazi painting of this period was thus a local interpretation of metropolitan fashions in book illustration, produced according to a tried and tested formula.

The names of very few Shirazi painters of the first half of the 16th century are known to us, some being described as figure-painters (*muṣavvir*), and others as illuminators (*muzahhib*). In his most recent study of the subject, Robinson could list only four: Ghiyas, Shaykhi, Husayn and Mahmud.<sup>3</sup> We can now add the name of a fifth painter, 'Abd al-Razzaq Musavvir, who flourished *circa* 1510–20.<sup>4</sup> The styles of other painters have been identified, but their work can only be designated by letters. 'Abd al-Razzaq is the only one of the five to identify himself as a *muṣavvir*. The other four style themselves *muzahhib*, even though they appear to have been responsible for paintings with figures. Robinson has also identified two painters who may have been exclusively illuminators. They are 'Abd al-Wahhab ibn 'Abd al-Fattah, who signed the illumination on a manuscript in Istanbul University Library, and Ruzbihan Muzahhib, who signed the illuminated opening pages in a three-volume copy of the complete works of Sa'di in Oxford.<sup>5</sup> Robinson has suggested that both may also have been figure-painters, as four of the five Shirazi artists known to have been figure-painters also called themselves *muzahhib*s. It is impossible to say whether Ruzbihan was also a figure-painter, but much other information is known about him, for he was one of the most famous scribe-illuminators of Shiraz during the first half of the 16th century and may well have been the leading master of the city. With the exceptions noted above, few manuscripts, and almost no Qur'ans, from 16th-century Shiraz were signed by their illuminators. Even Qur'ans signed by their scribes are relatively rare. Ruzbihan was therefore remarkable in signing both the illumination and the text of Qur'ans and secular works. Moreover, works signed by him exist from as early as 1514 and as late as 1547, and no other 16th-century illuminator signed so many manuscripts over such a long period. It may be accidental that we have, relatively speaking, so many examples of his signed work, and so few examples of that of other illuminators, but it may also be explained by his personal pre-eminence in the field. He may also have been the master of a large workshop with many apprentices, who produced illumination after his models but did not sign their work.

In the copy of the complete works of Sa'di that is now in Oxford, Ruzbihan recorded exactly where he produced it, in the *āstānah* of Mawlana Husam al-Din in Shiraz. This building no longer exists, but the word *āstānah* usually indicated a foundation or tomb. At

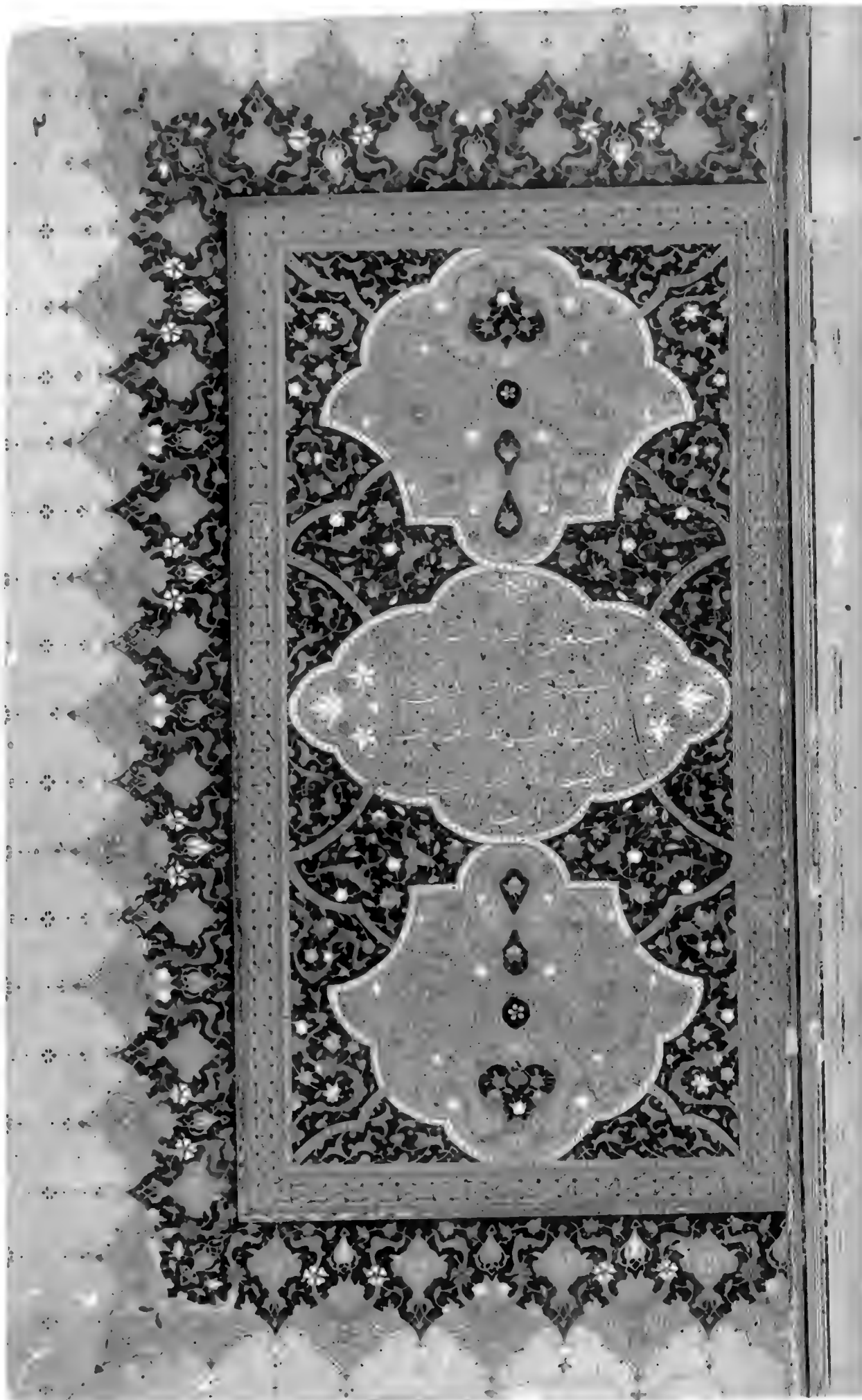
least six manuscripts are known to have been copied in this building between 1510 and 1525.<sup>6</sup> All these manuscripts are secular in content, but we need attach no special importance to this, as there is also a Qur'an dated 1584 that was copied at the *āstānah* of Hazrat-i Ma'sumah in Qumm.<sup>7</sup> It therefore seems that, in addition to their normal functions, these buildings were used as centres for manuscript production. Besides these religious foundations and the library ateliers of royal courts, of which we know rather more, there were also commercial establishments where manuscripts were made. According to Budaq Qazvini, who visited Shiraz in the 16th century, all the procedures of book production were undertaken in the private homes of the city, with the father, sons and daughters of the household participating as painters, scribes and binders. 'Should one want a thousand books, they could all be produced in Shiraz within a year.'<sup>8</sup> This picture of what were in essence small family businesses is confirmed by what we know of Ruzbihan and his family.

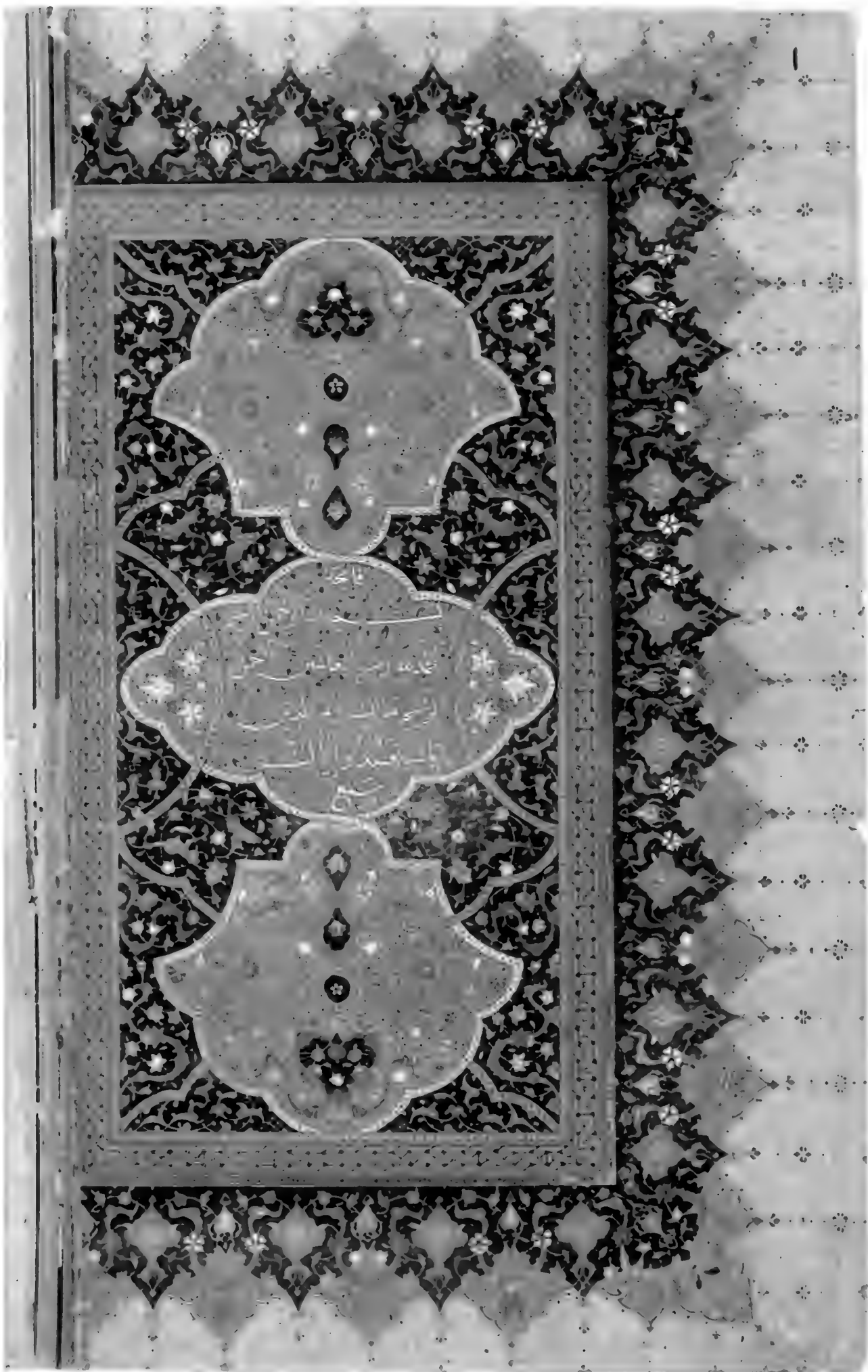
The Ruzbihan Muzahhib of the Oxford Sa'di manuscript can probably be identified with Mawlana Ruzbihan, the master calligrapher of Shiraz mentioned by Qazi Ahmad in the *Gulistān-i hunar*.<sup>9</sup> According to Qazi Ahmad, he was one of a group of masters who produced most of the monumental inscriptions in Shiraz, none of which appears to have survived. He is also described as a contemporary of Pir Muhammad al-Thani, with whom Ruzbihan worked in 1523–4 on a Qur'an that is now in Tehran.<sup>10</sup> In this manuscript the illuminator called himself 'Ruzbihan ibn Hajji Na'im al-Din al-Katib'. His father, Na'im al-Din, was almost certainly the well-known Shirazi scribe of that name who copied many manuscripts in the second half of the 15th century. In a *Khamsah* of Nizami copied in 1492–3 he gave his name as Na'im al-Din ibn Sadr al-Din Mudhahhib.<sup>11</sup> The 'Mudhahhib' – or 'Muzahhib' – in this name probably refers to Sadr al-Din, since Na'im al-Din is described as 'al-Katib' ('the scribe') by Ruzbihan. This shows that Ruzbihan came from a line of painters and calligraphers whose activities stretched back well into the 15th century, and we may presume that his father and grandfather would have been his teachers in the normal course of events.

Ruzbihan's earliest documented work can hardly have been his first, since it exhibits a fully developed style. If the manuscript of 1547 is one of his last works, he must have been active for about half a century, during which time he would have produced many more manuscripts than those listed in the table below. His father is known to have copied at least 14 manuscripts between 1481 and 1509–10, for example, and a contemporary of his father, Mun'im al-Din Awhadi Husayni, is known to have produced at least 17 manuscripts between 1486 and 1520 and probably produced many more. Mun'im al-Din collaborated with Ruzbihan on a copy of the *Dīvān* of Amir Khusraw now in Berlin,<sup>12</sup> and Mun'im al-Din's son, Ahmad, who was also a scribe and may have been a painter, had the same *laqab* – Na'im al-Din – as Ruzbihan's father. Given the situation in Shiraz described by Budaq Qazvini, it may be that there was a connection between the two families.

If Ruzbihan was his father's pupil, one might assume that the illumination in the manuscripts which Na'im al-Din produced towards the end of his life was executed by his son. Only one work of Na'im al-Din from the first quarter of the 16th century is known, a copy of the *Khamsah* of Nizami dated 1514.<sup>13</sup> The opening pages have illumination that is still essentially late Turkoman in character, but this was, of course, the style that Ruzbihan would have learnt as a young man. There are at least three other manuscripts copied by the scribe of the Berlin *Dīvān*, Mun'im al-Din Awhadi, between 1513 and 1522, and these may also have been illuminated by Ruzbihan.<sup>14</sup>







Manuscripts  
by or attributed to  
Ruzbihan Muhammad  
of Shiraz

Ruzbihan was an outstanding calligrapher, as is clearly demonstrated by a Qur'an in the Chester Beatty Library which must be considered his masterpiece. This manuscript was copied in a combination of scripts which were written in a great variety of colours on different backgrounds. He was also an illuminator of great accomplishment, whose work is marked by a wealth of detail and the high quality of its execution. The finest example is unquestionably the two opening pages of text in the Chester Beatty Qur'an. These are decorated with a composition on several levels which includes swirling polychrome arabesque scrolls overlaid with chinoiserie cloud scrolls in green, yellow, pale blue and brown. The wide border of blue and gold lappets is covered by the same pattern as the main field. These pages are identical to a detached pair in the Sackler Gallery, Washington, DC. The arrangement of the text in the Sackler version is slightly different, and the colours of the motifs have been altered, but the

- 1 An illustrated three-volume copy of the *Kulliyāt* ('complete works') of Sa'di. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Fraser 73. The text copied in the *āstānah* of Mawlana Husam al-Din Ibrahim in Shiraz. The illumination signed by Ruzbihan. Undated.<sup>15</sup>
- 2 An illustrated copy of the *Dīvān* of Amir Khusraw. Berlin, Islamisches Museum, MS. 16016. The text copied by Mun'im al-Din Awhadi Husayni and dated AH 920/AD 1514. The illumination signed by Ruzbihan.
- 3 A copy of the Qur'an. Tehran, Museum of Ancient Iran, shelfmark not recorded. The text copied by Pir Muhammad al-Thani and dated AH 929/AD 1523. The illumination signed by Ruzbihan and dated AH 930/AD 1524.<sup>16</sup>
- 4 A copy of the Qur'an. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, MS. 1588. Text and illumination by Ruzbihan. Undated.<sup>17</sup>
- 5 An illuminated frontispiece from a copy of the Qur'an. Washington, DC, Sackler Gallery of Asian Art, MS. s86,0082-4. Undated and unsigned. The design is almost identical to the frontispiece of no. 4 above.<sup>18</sup>
- 6 A copy of the Qur'an. Cat. 39 below. The text copied by Ruzbihan and dated AH 952/AD 1545-46. The illumination can be attributed to him.
- 7 A copy of the Qur'an. Cat. 40 below. Undated. The text copied by Ruzbihan. The illumination probably by another hand.
- 8 A copy of the Qur'an. Mashhad, Astan-i Quds Library, Qur'an MS. 136. The text signed by Ruzbihan and dated AH 954/AD 1547.<sup>19</sup>

compositions are otherwise the same, differing in their measurements by only a few millimetres. Although we should not underestimate the ability of Persian artists to produce almost exact copies freehand, it is probable that a stencil or template was used to draw out the basic design. A third example is of inferior quality, and the colours of the arabesques and cloud scrolls are much more subdued.<sup>20</sup> However, although there are variations in the border, which was scalloped instead of rectangular, the composition is undoubtedly a version of the other two. The composition in the Chester Beatty Qur'an and the Sackler frontispiece differs quite markedly from that in the Bodleian Sa'di manuscript, which is much more modest in scale and content and can be attributed to Ruzbihan's early years.<sup>21</sup> The Chester Beatty-Sackler Gallery composition must therefore date from the second quarter of the 16th century. The opening pages of the Qur'an by Ruzbihan now in the Khalili Collection, a product of Ruzbihan's final years, are also more modest, but the composition, the details and the execution are still of the highest quality.<sup>22</sup>

On the basis of the illuminated and illustrated frontispieces of the Bodleian Sa'di manuscript, Robinson has made out a strong case for Ruzbihan being an illustrator, that is a figure-painter, as well as an illuminator.<sup>23</sup> Although there are close similarities between the decorative detail in the frontispiece of the Bodleian manuscript and other work by Ruzbihan that was unknown to Robinson at the time of writing, it is still not possible to confirm that he was a figure-painter. The illustrated *Dīvān* of Amir Khusraw in Berlin, whose illumination is signed by Ruzbihan, is of little help since the paintings are quite different to those of the Bodleian manuscript and are clearly by another hand. Ruzbihan may have been responsible for the paintings in one of the manuscripts, but it has yet to be determined which one.

1. Robinson 1979.

2. Guest 1949; and Robinson 1979a.

3. Robinson 1979a, p. 106.

4. His work can be identified in several manuscripts, including a copy of the *Khamsah* of Nizami in Istanbul (Museum of Turkish & Islamic Arts, MS. 1991), in which he signed the painting of *Majnun and Layla* at School on folio 119b.

5. Bodleian Library, MS. Fraser 73; see the table on p. 148.

6. Robinson 1979a, p. 105, note 4.

7. Bayani 1345-58, IV, no. 349.

8. *Jawāhir al-akhbār*, Leningrad Public Library, MS. Dorn 228;

see Rogers 1988, p. 88, note 14.

9. Qazi Ahmad-Minorsky, p. 67.

10. See Bayani 1328, no. 79.

11. Welch 1978-8, IV, cat. no. 12.

12. Islamisches Museum, MS. 16016.

13. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, MS. 13.228.6.

14. London, British Library, OR. MS. 11,847, which is dated 1513-14; Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, MS. H746, dated 1520-21; and London, Royal Asiatic Society, MS. 246A, dated 1521-2.

15. Ethé & Sachau 1889, cat. no. 687; Robinson 1958, p. 90.

16. Bayani 1328, no. 79;

Bahrami 1949, cat. no. 70.

17. Arberry 1967, cat. no. 156;

James 1980, pls 58-60.

18. Lowry & Nemazee 1988, pp. 64-7.

19. Ma'ani 1347, cat. no. 86.

20. This is the frontispiece to a copy of the Qur'an offered for sale to the Khalili Collection in 1989 but not acquired.

21. It is reproduced in Gray 1979 (p. 45, fig. 22).

22. The composition is similar to that in a copy of the *Khamsah* of Nizami with illustrations by Shaykhi, which is dated a few years earlier; see Robinson 1979, pl. 1a.

23. Robinson 1979a, p. 108.

## Single-volume Qur'an

Shiraz, AH952/AD1545–6

256 folios, 26.6 × 17 cm, with

15 lines to the page

*Material* A thick, smooth, lightly polished buff paper, laid, with an indeterminate number of lines to the centimetre

*Text area* 19 × 10.3 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1.2 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh, incidentals in the thulth

*Scribe* Ruzbihan (Muhammad) al-Tab'ī al-Shirazi

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Modern

*Accession no.* QUR111

*Comparative items* Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, MS. 1588;<sup>1</sup> Washington, DC, Sackler Gallery, MS. S86, 8082–4;<sup>2</sup> and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Fraser 73.<sup>3</sup>

1. Arberry 1967, cat. no. 156; and James 1980, cat. nos 58–60.

2. Lowry & Nemazee 1988, cat. nos 7–8.

3. Robinson 1958, p. 90.

4. Chester Beatty Library, MS. 1588; and Sackler Gallery, MS. S86, 8082–4.

5. Bodleian Library, MS. Fraser 73.

The scribe of this Qur'an, Ruzbihan Muhammad al-Tab'ī al-Shirazi, also appears to have been the illuminator. The fact is not recorded in the manuscript, but the frontispiece shares details with illumination known to be by him. These include the painting of the cloud scrolls and the type of gold blossoms placed at the ends of the arabesque scrolls. Other details that appear in the decoration of cat. 39 – the three-leaf motif used in the central panels, for example – do not occur in the frontispieces of two other Qur'ans decorated by Ruzbihan,<sup>4</sup> and the gold blossoms in these two manuscripts are heightened with green, while those in cat. 39 are not. However, a copy of the complete works of Sa'di whose illumination was also signed by Ruzbihan has details that do not appear in these frontispieces.<sup>5</sup> Another strong argument in favour of attributing the decoration of cat. 39 to Ruzbihan is its very high quality.

The first two pages of text are fully illuminated, while the text on the two following pages – the first verses of *Sūrat al-baqarah* (11) – are set in cloud cartouches over a gold ground with fragmentary arabesque decoration. The closing pages of text are presented in the same manner. On the remaining pages the text is surrounded by gold and coloured rules. Verses are punctuated by gold rosettes, and groups of ten and five verses are indicated in the margin by circular or oval medallions, without inscriptions. On folios 253b–254a a prayer to be read upon completion of the text has been written in oval medallions. These pages are fully illuminated after the manner of the opening pages of contemporary Shirazi Qur'ans. Folios 254b–256a contain a *fālnāmah*.

There is a note recording the ownership of the manuscript which is accompanied by an impression of the seal of the Khan-i Khanan dated AH 1312/AD 1895.



سورة النمل

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
أَمْ تَرَكَيْتَ فَعْلَ ذَٰلِكَ بَأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ  
أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ  
وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ  
تَرْمِيهِمْ حِجَارًا مِنْ سِجْلٍ  
جَعَلْنَاهُمْ كَصَفِ

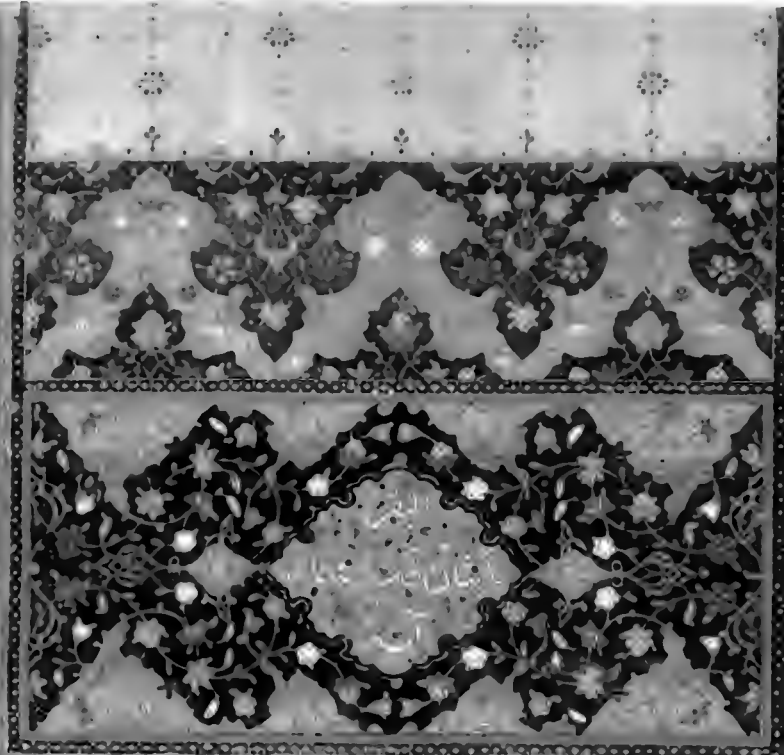
سورة النمل

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
لَا يَلَا فِ قَوْمٍ إِلَّا فِيهِمْ رَحِلَةٌ شَارَةٌ لَقِيَتْ  
فَلْفَعْدُ وَأَرَبَ  
هَذَا الْبَقِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ  
وَأَسْهَمَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

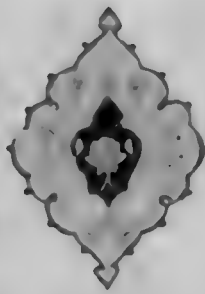
سورة النمل

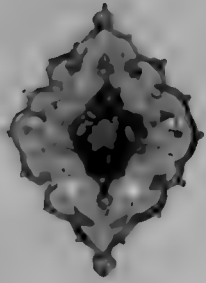
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ  
فَإِنَّكَ الَّذِي يُدْعَى الْيَوْمَ  
وَلَا أَحْمَدُ  
عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ  
فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ  
 مِنَ النَّاسِ قَالُوا اتُّمِّنْ كَمَا مِنَ النَّفْثِ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ النَّفْثُ  
 لَكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ وَإِذَا الْفُلُ أَدْبَرَ أَمْوًا قَالُوا أَمَّا وَإِذَا حُلَا إِلَى شَاطِئِهِ  
 قَالُوا اتَّاعَمَكُمُ امَّاخِجْ مَسْجُودَاتِ اللَّهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمْدُحُ فِي  
 طَعْنَانِهِمْ يَمْهُونَ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ شَذَّوْا الصَّلَاةَ بِالْهَدْيِ فَمَا  
 رَجَعَ خَارِجُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ مِثْلَهُمْ كَمِثْلِ الَّذِينَ سَوَّغُوا  
 نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَصَابَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ  
 لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ضَمَّ يَوْمَ تَكُونُ فِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ أَفْجَاءَ النَّفْسِ  
 فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِنَ  
 الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ كَذَّابُ الْبَرِّ  
 يُخْطَفُ أَصَابِعُهُمْ كُلًّا أَصَابَهُمْ مِثْوَاهُ وَإِذَا أَنْظَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا  
 وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ  
 يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ  
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنزَلَ  
 مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّرَابِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَاحِظُوا إِلَهُكُمْ أَنْتُمْ

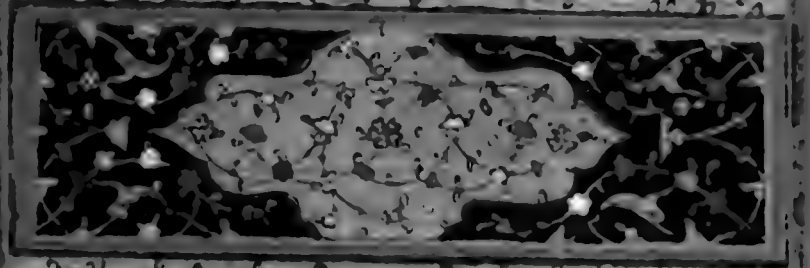


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ لِيَأْتِيَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ يُخَوِّفُونَ  
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالصَّلَاتِ وَكَثِيرٍ مِمَّا هُمْ يُفْقُونَ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ يُمْنُونَ  
بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَيَالْآخِرَةَ هُمْ يَقُولُونَ  
عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ يُظَاهَرُونَ أَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا  
عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ أَلَمْ تَنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۚ خَسِمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ  
فَلَوْ بَيَّنَّا وَفِي سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ  
وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ  
يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يُخْدَعُونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ  
فَلَوْ بَيَّنَّا مَرَضَهُمْ فَرَأَوْهُم مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۚ كَانُوا  
يَكْذِبُونَ ۚ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُسْبِحُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصَلِّونَ





قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِمَا النَّاسُ مَلِكُ النَّاسِ إِلَهَ النَّاسِ مِنْ شَرِّ النَّاسِ  
الْمُخَانِسِ الَّذِي يُوسِرُ فِي صَدَقِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الْخِيَانَةِ وَالنَّاسِ



كَتَبَهُ الْعَبْدُ الضَّعِيفُ الْفَقِيرُ الْمَحْجَاجُ إِلَى رَحْمَةِ  
اللَّهِ الْمَلِكِ الْغَنَازِ الْعَفِيِّ وَفِيهَا الصَّغِيرُ السِّرَازِي  
حَامِدًا لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَى نِعَمِهِ وَمَصْلُحَاتِهِ أَوْسَمًا عَلَى  
نَبِيِّهِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَالْطَّاهِرِينَ فِي شَهْرِ رَجَبِ الْمَعْظُمِ  
سَنَةِ ائْتِنِ وَخَمْسِينَ وَسَعْفَايَةَ مِنَ الْهَجْرَةِ النَّوِيَّةِ



الْمُصْطَفَوِيَّةِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ  
عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
تَبَت يَدَايَ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ وَمَا غَفَرْتُ مَالَهُ وَمَا كَسَبْتُ  
سِغْلِي نَارَ أَذَاتِ هَبْ وَأَمْرَاتِهِ حَسْبُ مَالِهِ الْحَطَّاءُ فِي حِدَاهَا

جَلَّ جَلَّ  
مِنْ مَكِيدِ

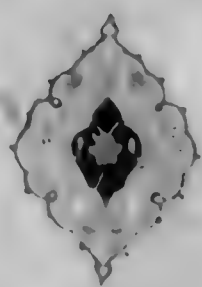
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ

كُفُوًا  
أَحَدٌ

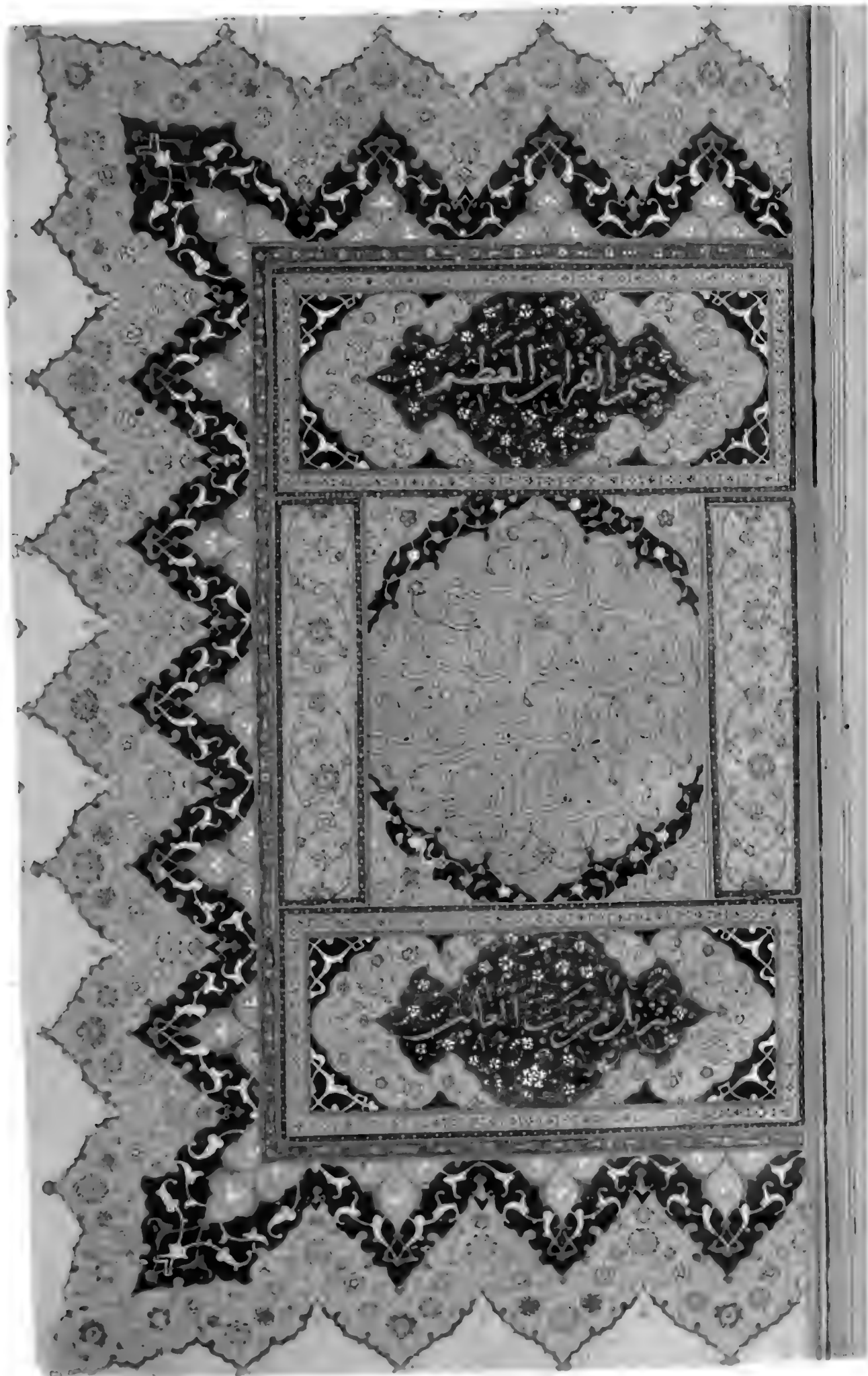
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفُلُوقِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا  
وَقَفَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ الْفَقَائَاتِ فِي الْعَقَدِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ

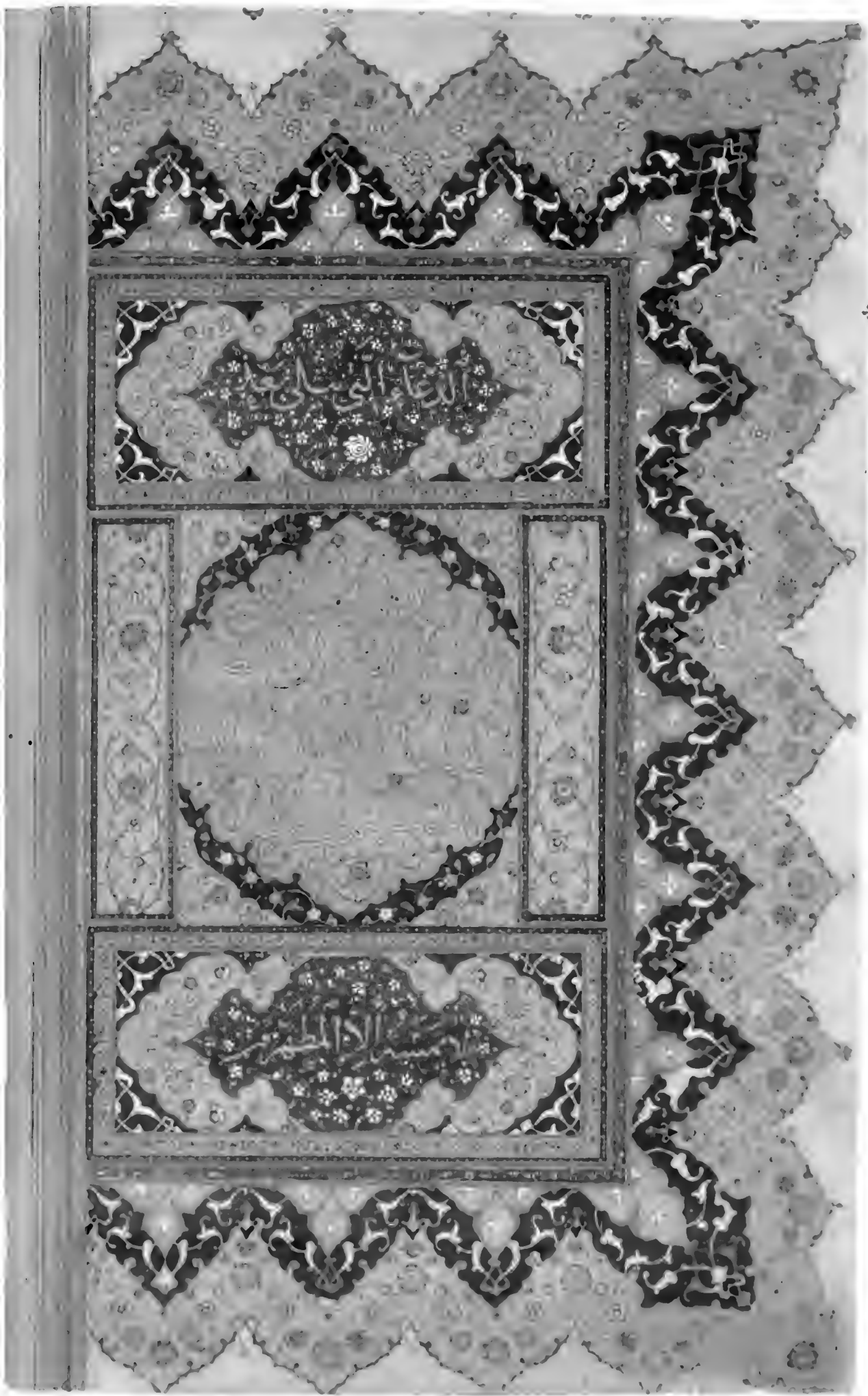
إِذَا أَحَدٌ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ









40

## Single-volume Qur'an

Shiraz, circa 1525–1550

383 folios, 32.5 × 21 cm, with  
13 lines to the page

*Material* The text is on a gold-  
sprinkled cream paper, laid,  
with 6–7 lines to the centimetre.  
The margins are of a light cream  
19th-century European paper, laid,  
with 10 lines to the centimetre and  
regular chain lines. There are some  
remains of watermarks which may  
indicate a Russian origin

*Text area* 21.5 × 12.2 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1.2 cm

*Script* The main text in a  
combination of muḥaqqaq and  
naskh, incidentals in thulth  
*Scribe* Ruzbihan Muhammad  
Tab'i Shirazi

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* 18th or 19th century

*Accession no.* QUR60

*Comparative items* Dublin,  
Chester Beatty Library, MS. 1588;<sup>1</sup>  
Washington, DC, Sackler Gallery,  
MS. S86, 8082–4.<sup>2</sup>

1. Arberry 1967, cat.no. 156; and  
James 1980, cat.nos 58–60.

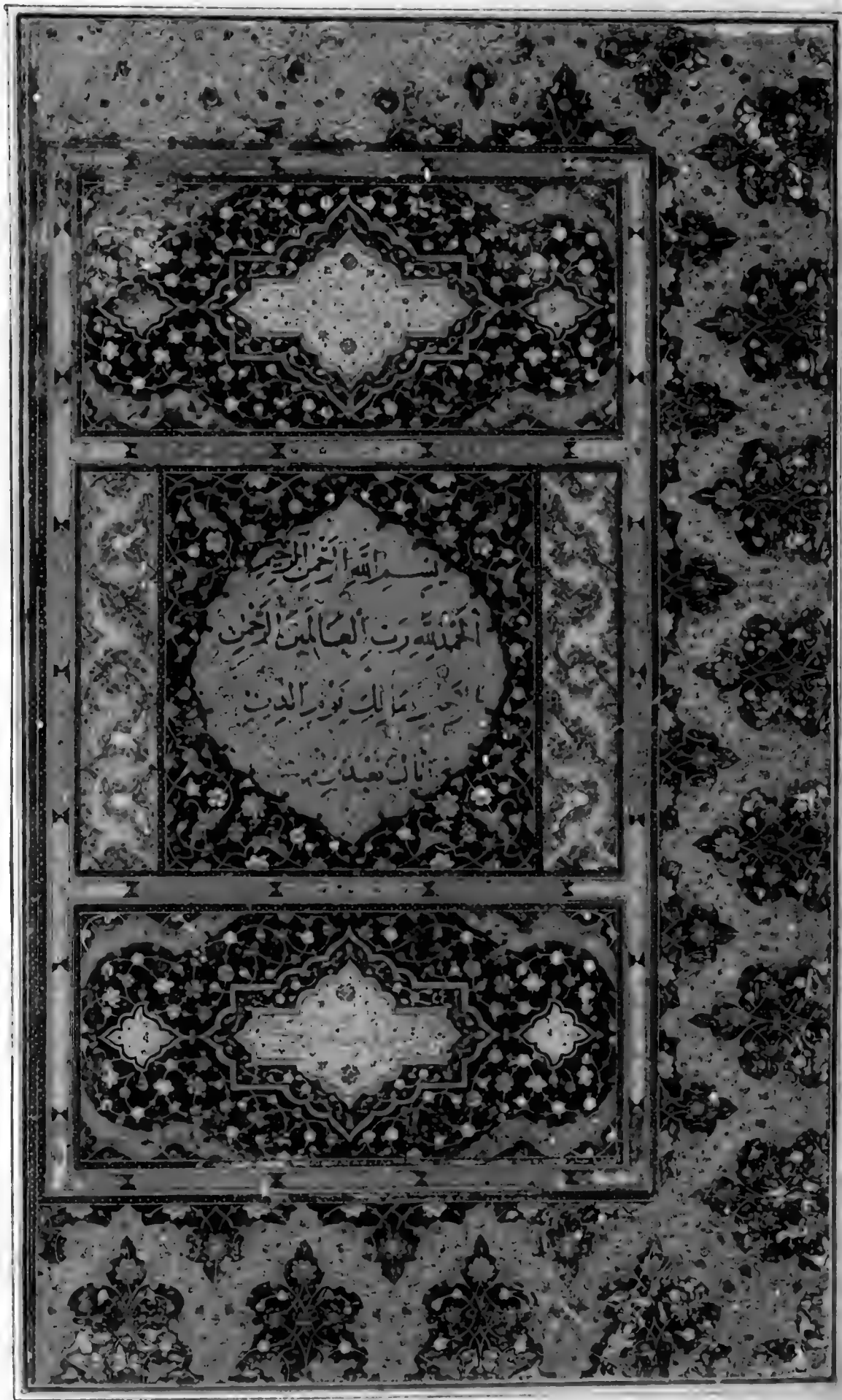
2. Lowry & Nemazee 1988,  
cat.nos 7–8.

The script of this manuscript is of a high quality, and the hand is certainly that of Ruzbihan. The illumination has undergone some retouching. It is not of the same standard as other manuscripts illuminated by Ruzbihan and may be the work of an assistant. The motifs used include the large blossoms in green and gold that occur at the ends of arabesque scrolls in the Qur'an by the same master now in the Chester Beatty Library, but the multi-coloured cloud scrolls he used in profusion throughout that manuscript are entirely absent.

Cat. 40 opens with a large illuminated medallion containing *Sūrat al-isrā'* (XVII), verse 9. The size of this medallion, whose left-hand lobe has been truncated, suggests that the manuscript was very much larger before it was restored in the 19th century. The first surah is spread over folios 1b–2a and was written on the decorated gold ground of two medallions set in the centre of the elaborately decorated pages. *Sūrat al-baqarah* (II) begins on folio 2b with an illuminated head-piece, which contains the heading set in a gold cartouche. The *naskh* text on this and the following page is surrounded by cloud cartouches against a gold ground. The *muḥaqqaq* text is in gold on a blue ground or in blue on a gold ground. Subsequent pages are divided into panels by gold rules. The first and thirteenth lines on each page are in gold *muḥaqqaq* outlined in black, and the seventh line is in blue *muḥaqqaq*. The remainder of the text is in black *naskh* in narrower panels. Surah headings are in white *thulth* and are set within illuminated panels whose width depends on whether the heading falls within the *muḥaqqaq* or the *naskh* text.

There are two prayers at the end of the manuscript, the second being set within a star-shaped medallion. Like the devices in the margins indicating standard divisions of the text, this medallion is a later addition.

The black shagreen binding is of the type associated with the Zand period (1750–94). The covers have stamped central medallions with double pendants and corner-pieces. The stamped areas have been gilded and painted in red, yellow and green and then varnished. These elements have been outlined in gold, and there is a gold painted border. The red shagreen doublures also have central medallions with double pendants and corner-pieces, but they are decorated with a variety of motifs in a number of different colours.





يُحَادِّثُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يُحَدِّثُونَ إِلَّا  
أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۚ قُلُوبُهُمْ مُرْضٍ قَرَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُرْضًا  
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ أَلِيمٌ ۖ مَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ۚ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ  
لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ۚ إِلَّا  
أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۚ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا

السَّهَاءِ ۚ إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ السَّهَاءُ ۚ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۚ وَإِذَا  
لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنُوا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَى شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا  
إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِؤْنَ ۚ اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمْدُدُهُمْ  
فِي طَعْنَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ شَرُّوا الصَّلَاةَ  
بِالْهَدَىٰ فَمَارَجَحَتْ حُجَّتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ۚ سَلَامٌ





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ اللَّهَ عَظِيمًا  
وَرُفْقَانًا يُفْقَهُونَ ۖ كَوَالَّذِينَ يُوْشِكُونَ بِنَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا  
أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ وَاقِعُونَ ۖ وَأُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى  
مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۖ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنْذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۖ خَمَّ  
اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاقٌ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنْذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

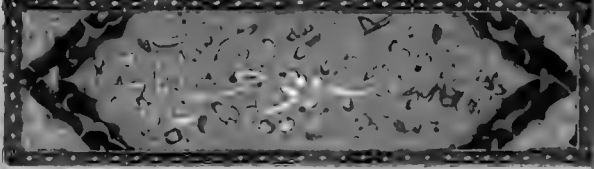
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ قَدْ تَشَفَّعَ عِبْدُ رُؤُسِهِمْ مُحَمَّدٌ طَبِيعِي شَيْءٌ أَكْبَرُ

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

اِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ وَرَأَيْتَ

النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ  
وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي هَبٍ وَتَبَّ مَا أَغْنَىٰ

عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَتْ سَيْصُلُهُ نَارَ آذَانِ لَحَبٍ  
وَأَمْرَأَةٍ خَمَلَتْ بِحَبْلٍ مُنْسَدٍ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

عَلَىٰ هَوَاءٍ أَوَّلَهُ وَالصَّهَابُ مِمَّا رَكَا

41

# Single-volume Qur'an

Shiraz, circa 1525-1550

294 folios, 37 × 25 cm, with

15 lines to the page

*Material* A lightly polished cream

paper, laid, with 6 lines to the

centimetre; the laid lines sag

noticeably

*Text area* 22.2 × 11.4 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1.6 cm

*Script* The main text in muḥaqqaq,

incidentals in thulth

*Binding* Contemporary

*Accession no.* QUR 441

*Published* Sotheby's 1989,

lot no. 197

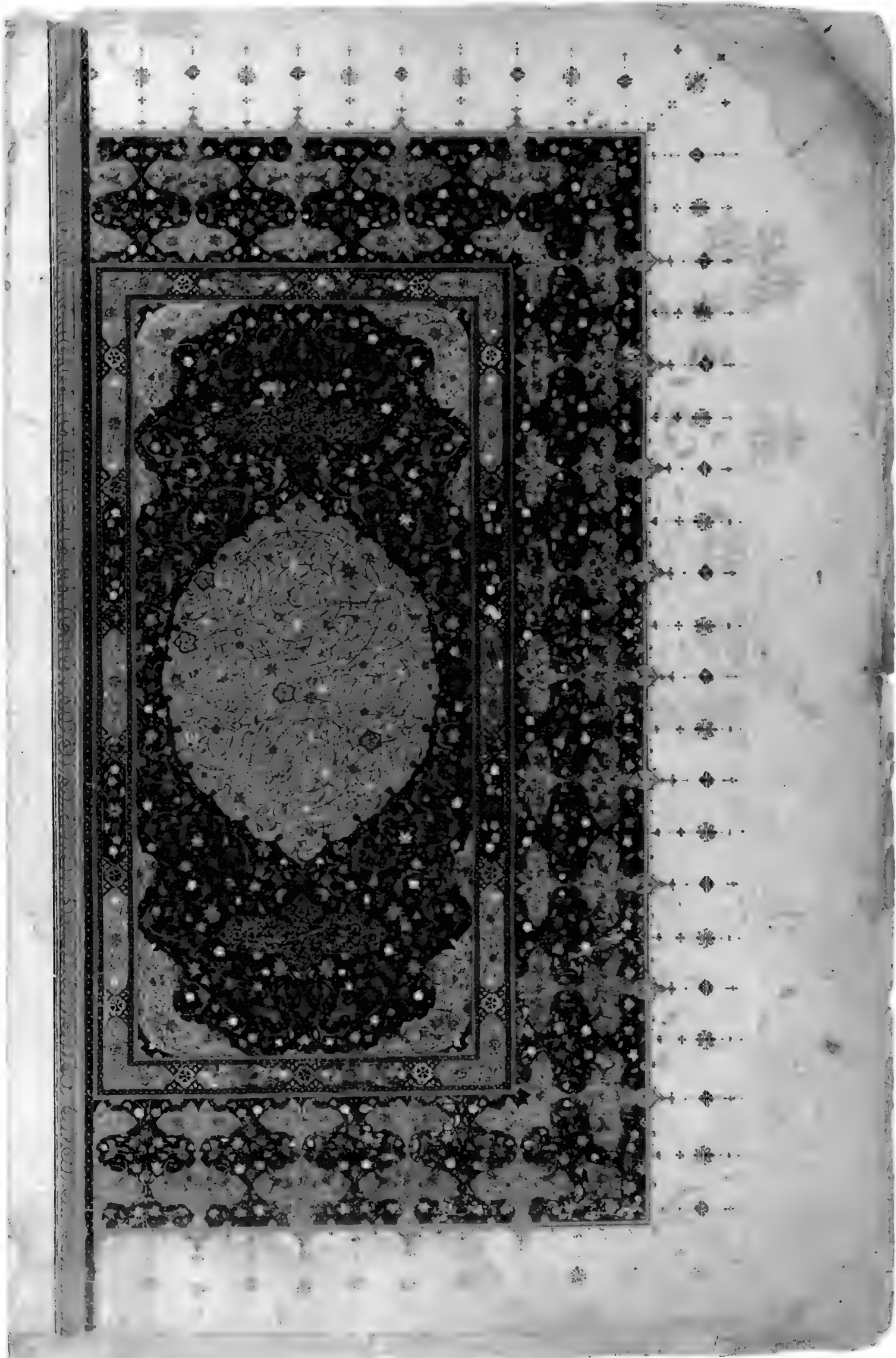
The manuscript opens with the medallions typical of Shirazi illumination at this time, but they are surrounded by very untypical floral arabesques with large blossoms in gold, brown and pale blue. The opening pages of text, on the other hand, are magnificent examples of the finest Shirazi illumination of this period. They contain *Sūrat al-fātiḥah* (I) written in gold within pale blue medallions. The text on the following two pages, which contain the beginning of *Sūrat al-baqarah* (II), is set in cloud cartouches against a gold ground with fragmentary arabesques, and the surah begins with an illuminated heading surmounted by a border. The verses on these pages are separated by gold knots, and the devices marking groups of five and ten verses are also more elaborate than in the rest of the manuscript.

The text, which is surrounded by a wide gold border and coloured rules, is in alternate lines of blue and gold *muḥaqqaq*. The gold script is outlined in black. Verses are punctuated by gold rosettes, while groups of five verses are indicated by medallions with floral decoration, and groups of ten verses by lozenges with palmettes.

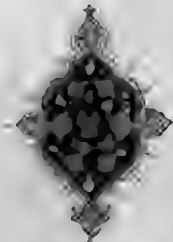
The surah headings are in white *thulth* and are very finely decorated, with the titles set in gold cartouches within panels of arabesque decoration. The pages marking the beginning of *Sūrat al-kahf* (XVIII), the half-way point in the text, are fully illuminated in the best Shirazi manner, with orange and green cloud scrolls prominently displayed. The end of the Qur'anic text is followed by a prayer. It is spread over two illuminated pages, with each line in a panel imitating a surah heading. The manuscript terminates with a *fālnāmah*.

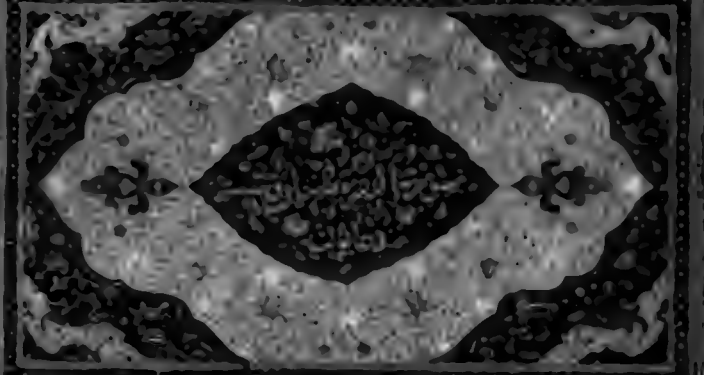
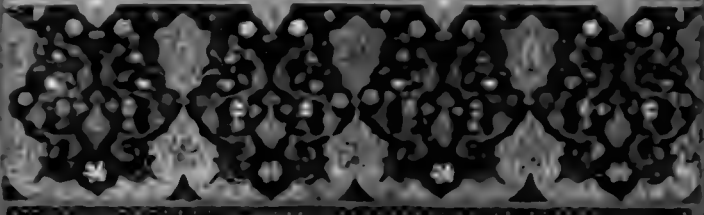
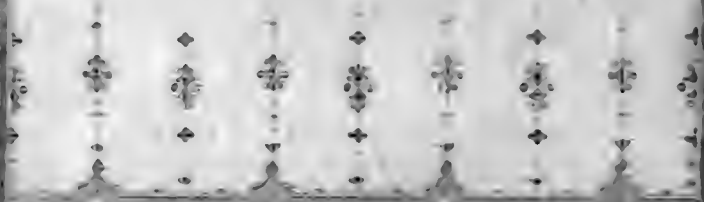
The worn covers have central medallions with pendants set against a ground of cloud scrolls and arabesques, and there is an outer border of cartouches and quatrefoils, all brushed with gold. The brown morocco doublures have central medallions with pendants, corner-pieces and an outer border of cartouches, all decorated with brown or gilt leather filigree against a blue ground. The main field and the inner border have been brushed with gold.



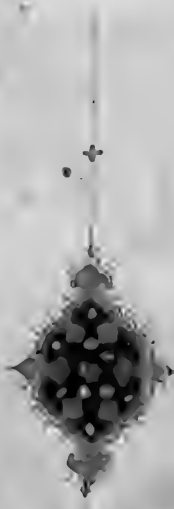




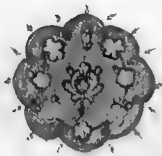




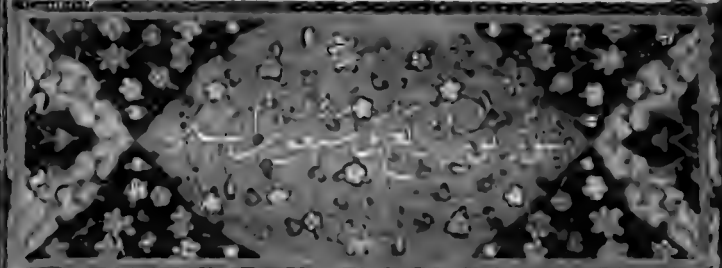
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
مَرَدُّكَ الْكَافِ لَا يَبْقَى فِيهِ عَذَابٌ مُلْكِيٌّ الَّذِي تَقُولُ  
يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا  
يَوْمَ تَكُونُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا  
الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ  
كَفَرُوا وَسُوءَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ وَالْمَلَأُوا  
الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ  
وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا  
وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا  
وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا الْأَرْضَ وَالْمَلَأُوا



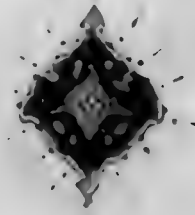
اللَّهُ أَنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَيْسَ هَذَا  
 عَمَلًا مَأْمُورًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ • الزَّانِي لَا يَنْفَعُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً  
 أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْفَعُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ وَحُرِّمَ  
 عَلَيْكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ • وَالَّذِينَ هُزِلُوا الْمُحْصَنَاتُ تَزْنِيْنَ  
 بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ  
 شَهَادَةً أُمًّا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ • إِلَّا الَّذِينَ يَأْتُونَ  
 بِعِدَّةٍ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ • وَالَّذِينَ يَزْنُونَ  
 أَرْوَاحَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ شُهَدَاءُ إِلَّا أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَادَةُ  
 أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ وَالْخَامِسَةُ  
 أَنْ لَيْسَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ إِزْكَارٌ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ • وَيَذَرُ  
 عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعُ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ  
 لَمِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ • وَالْخَامِسَةُ أَنْ غَضَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا أَنْ كَلَّمَ  
 مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ • وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ  
 تَوَّابٌ حَكِيمٌ • إِنْ أَلْبَسْنَا أُولَئِكَ عُصْبَةً مِنْكُمْ لَا يَحْسَبُ  
 شَرَّ الْكُفْرِ مِنْهُ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ مِنْهُمْ مَا كُتِبَ



الْيَوْمَ نَبَا صَبْرُوا وَانْفِرْهُمُ الْفَارِزُونَ قَالَ كَلَيْتُمْ فِي  
الْأَرْضِ عِدَّةً مِنْ قَبْلِ الْيَوْمِ أَنْ يَنْصُرَ قَوْمٌ مَوْسَى  
الْعَادِينَ قَالَ إِنْ لَيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا لَوْ أَنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ  
لَعَسَ أَنْ تَمَاسِكُنَا أَكْغِشَاءُ الْكِبَرِ الْيَوْمَ تَعْلَمُونَ  
اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَبِيرِ  
يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ الْكَافُورُونَ وَقُلُوبٌ أَغْفِرُوا زَخْرًا وَتُخَيَّرُوا خَيْرًا  
رَحِيمًا



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
سُورَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ مِائَتُ عَشْرٌ آيَاتٍ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ  
وَاحِدٍ مِمَّنِ اسْتَأْذَنَ لِلزَّانِيَةِ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا



42

## Single folio

Shiraz, *circa* 1525–1550

41.4 × 29.4 cm, with

12 lines to the page

*Material* A lightly polished  
cream paper, probably wove

*Text area* 25.2 × 16 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 2 cm

*Interlinear rules* 2 cm apart

*Script* Muḥaqqaq

*Accession no.* QUR 494

This page, which contains verses 8–40 of *Sūrat al-hijr* (xv), comes from a manuscript in which each line of text was set in a ruled panel. Qur'ans with their text arranged in this manner were rare before the 18th century, when they became common in Iran and India. In these later examples, the text is often accompanied by an interlinear translation. In cat. 42, the text is in alternate lines of gold and black and was written over different coloured grounds, a practice that was extremely rare in any period. The black lettering is set against a beige ground, and the gold lettering, which is not outlined in black, is set against pale blue and brown grounds. Each panel is separated by a border of blue rules, and there are heavy gold, blue and orange rules around the outer edge. The vocalization is in black. Verses are separated by gold stars within circles, and each tenth and fifth verse is marked by arabesque or floral ornaments.

The location of the rest of this manuscript is unknown, except for another single folio in a private collection in Geneva.



وَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمٍ يَكُونُ فِيهِ  
الْأَسْمَانُ كَالْعِظَامِ كَالْهَيْبَةِ

قَبْلَكَ فِي شَيْعِ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا نُفُورٌ بِهِ

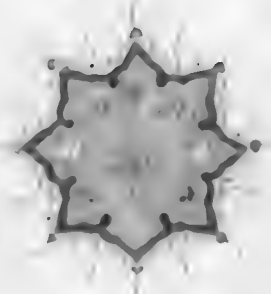
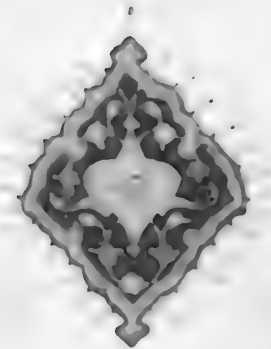
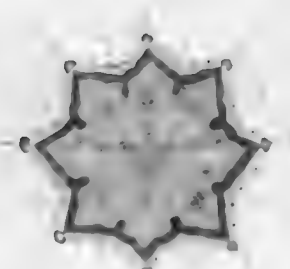
خَلَقَ سُنَّةَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَلَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَظَلُّوا

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا لِلنَّاظِرِينَ وَحَفِظْنَاهَا

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَالْقِيَامَ فِيهَا رُءُوسًا وَانْتَبَاهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

إِلَّا عِنْدَ نَاخِرَاتِهِ وَمَا نُنْزِلُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ وَإَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيحَ

وَأَنَا لَنَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَنَحْنُ الْوَارِثُونَ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ



## Single-volume Qur'an

Shiraz or Qazvin, AH959/AD1552

203 folios, 42.7 × 30 cm, with  
17 lines to the page

*Material* A polished buff paper, laid,  
with 5–6 lines to the centimetre; the  
bifolios are made up of two separate  
sheets joined at the gutter

*Text area* 23.5 × 15.9 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1 cm

*Script* The main text in muḥaqqaq  
and naskh, incidentals in thulth

*Documentation* A colophon and  
numerous seals and librarians'  
inscriptions

*Binding* Contemporary

*Accession no.* QUR729

*Published* Falk 1985, cat.no.66

*Comparative item* Dublin, Chester  
Beatty Library, MS. 1558.<sup>1</sup>

1. See Arberry 1967, cat.no.156;  
James 1980, cat.nos 58–60; and  
James 1991.

2. Falk 1985, cat.no.66.

3. The seals are not royal seals (Falk  
1985, *loc. cit.*) but are those of court  
officials.

4. Shahnawaz Khan-Beveridge,  
II/1, pp.231–3. I am grateful to  
Robert Skelton for pointing out the  
possible connection with the royal  
*zanānah*.

5. Chester Beatty Library, MS. 1558.  
See the table on p.148 above.

6. The pages of the Chester Beatty  
Qur'an measure 42.7 × 29 cm  
(Arberry 1967, p.48). The  
correspondence is remarkably  
close, and it may have been closer  
still, for the Chester Beatty  
manuscript has been rebound, and  
it is possible that the pages were  
trimmed at this time.

7. Irigoin 1962, p.19.

This magnificent manuscript is certainly one of the finest Safavid Qur'ans of the 16th century, and Anthony Welch has suggested that it may have been the property of Shah Tahmasp, the Safavid ruler of Iran at the time it was made.<sup>2</sup> Some support for this suggestion is provided by the later history of the manuscript, for at one point it belonged to the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (*reg* 1628–57), who may have been given it by a contemporary Safavid shah.

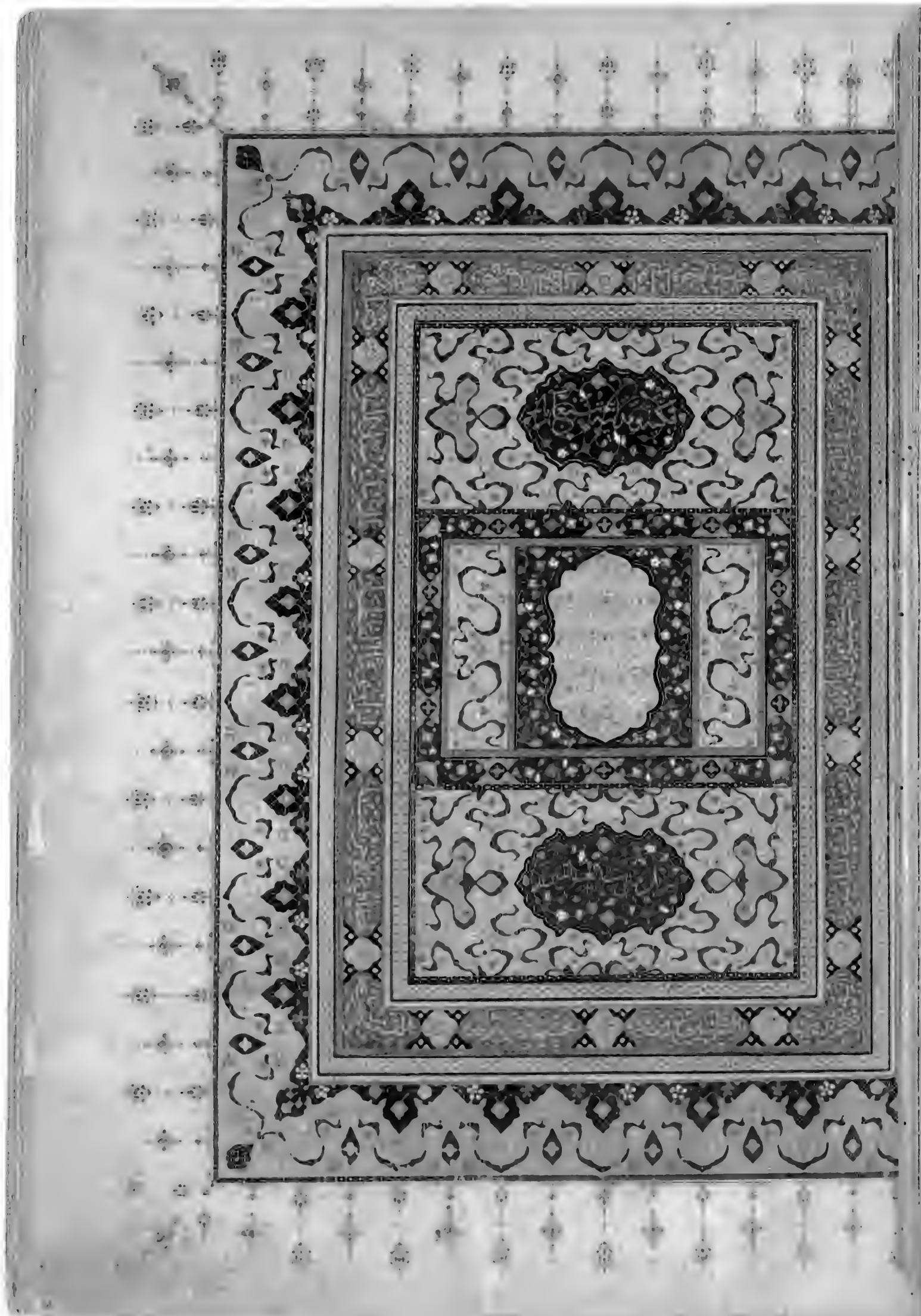
On folio 1a there is a partially erased inscription in what appears to be Shah Jahan's own hand. Folio 203b bears a number of seals and inscriptions from the reigns of this emperor and of his two immediate successors, which record inspections of the manuscript and changes of librarian.<sup>3</sup> Several of the court officials named bore the title *khwājah*, which suggests that they were eunuchs and that the manuscript was kept in the women's quarters (*zanānah*). Another person mentioned is Muhammad Khan, who may have been the Muhammad Khan who was in the service of Zaynat al-Nisa' Begum, the daughter of Awrangzeb.<sup>4</sup>

Like several large Qur'ans of exceptional quality that were evidently produced in Iran in the 16th century, cat.43 contains no indication of where or for whom it was made. The style of illumination could be either Shirazi or Qazvini, for there are no obvious differences between the two. Another outstanding Qur'an of the period was copied and illuminated by a Shirazi artist in the 1540s.<sup>5</sup> The pages of this manuscript have the same dimensions as those of cat.43, which might suggest that it too was produced in Shiraz.<sup>6</sup> However, the bifolios of cat.43 were created by gluing two sheets together at the gutter. The single sheets measured 49 × 30 cm, which was one of the standard paper sizes in Egypt and Syria in this period.<sup>7</sup> There is no comparable information for Iran, but it is possible that this was a standard size there too.

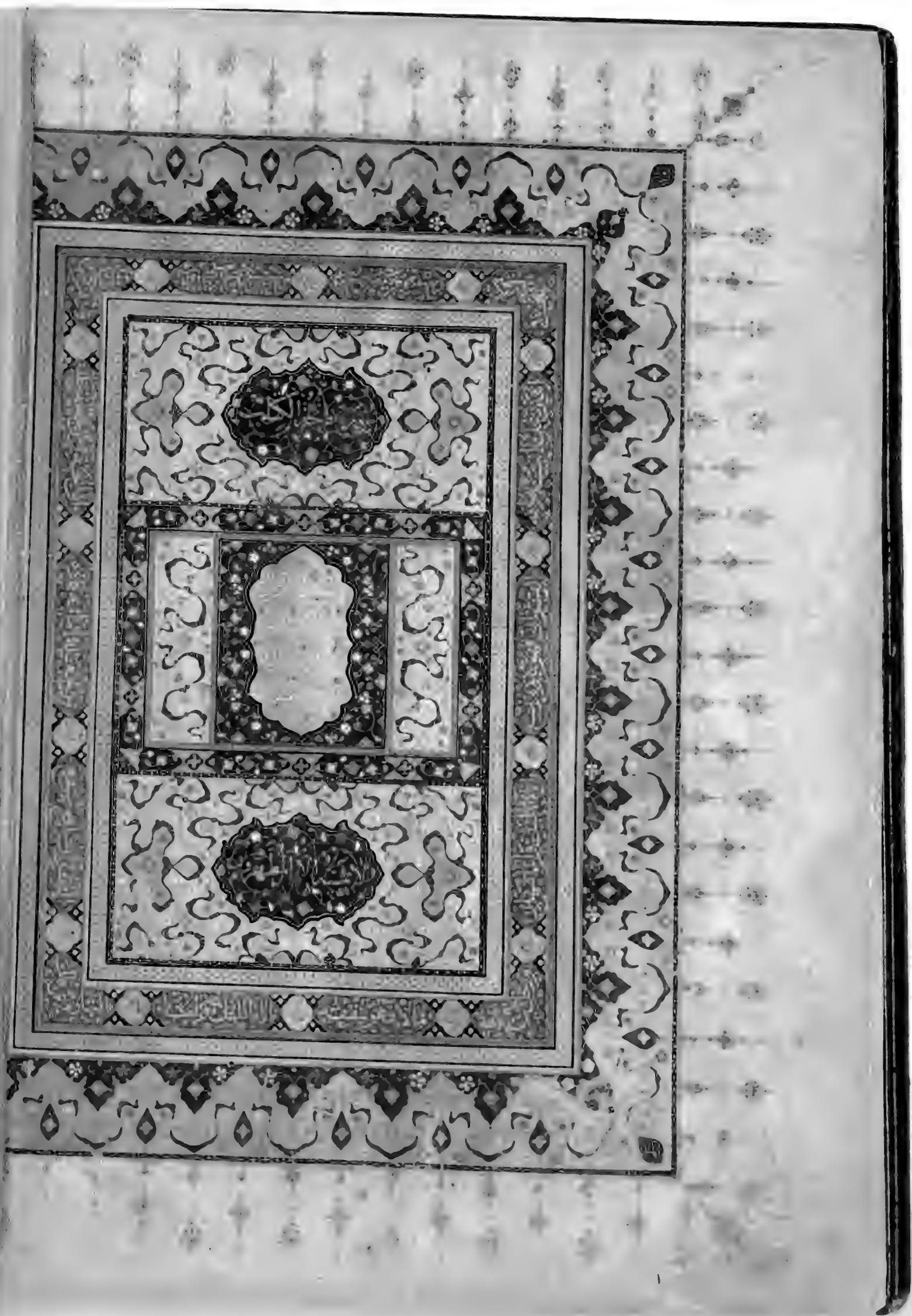
Cat.43 opens with a double page of sumptuous illumination bearing *Sūrat al-fāṭihah* (1). The outer border contains a series of Prophetic *ḥadīths*. The second surah, *Sūrat al-baqarah*, commences with a fine head piece surmounted by a line of reciprocal trefoils. Each page of text is written in five panels, three containing one line of blue *muḥaqqaq*, and two containing seven lines of *naskh* written in gold without an outline. On the opening pages of *Sūrat al-baqarah* and on the final pages of text, the *muḥaqqaq* is written over a decorated gold ground. The panels of *naskh* are narrower than the panels of *muḥaqqaq*, and the rectangular spaces at either side are filled with ornament whose colour and motifs change from opening to opening. The motifs used are simple floral scrolls, floral scrolls with large blossoms, cloud scrolls, and intertwined flower chains.

Surah headings are in gold *thulth* and are set in delicately and variously illuminated panels whose width varies according to whether











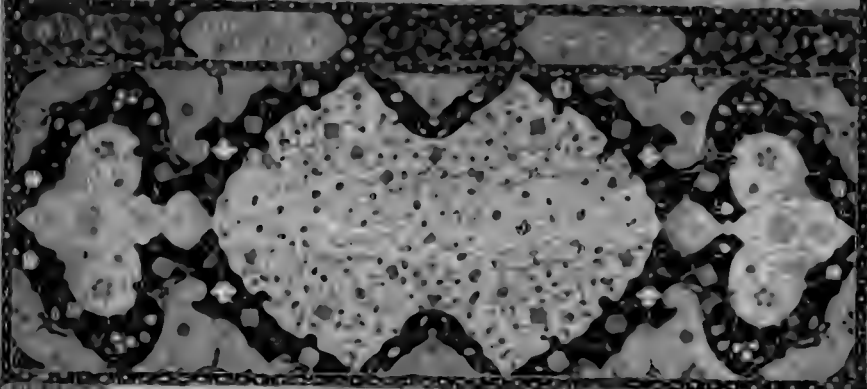
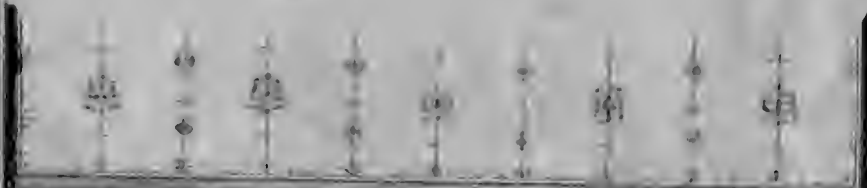
قَالَ امْنَا وَادْخُلُوا الْبَيْتَ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُخْرُجُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ

عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِهِمْ وَاصْبَاحَهُمْ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ

الْأَلْفُ مِائَتُ مِائَةٍ مِائَةٍ مِائَةٍ مِائَةٍ مِائَةٍ مِائَةٍ مِائَةٍ مِائَةٍ

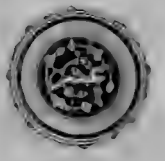
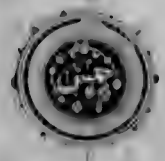


وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آلِهِمْ وَنُسُلِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ  
تَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ  
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

مَرْيَمَ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آلِهِمْ وَنُسُلِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ  
تَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ  
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

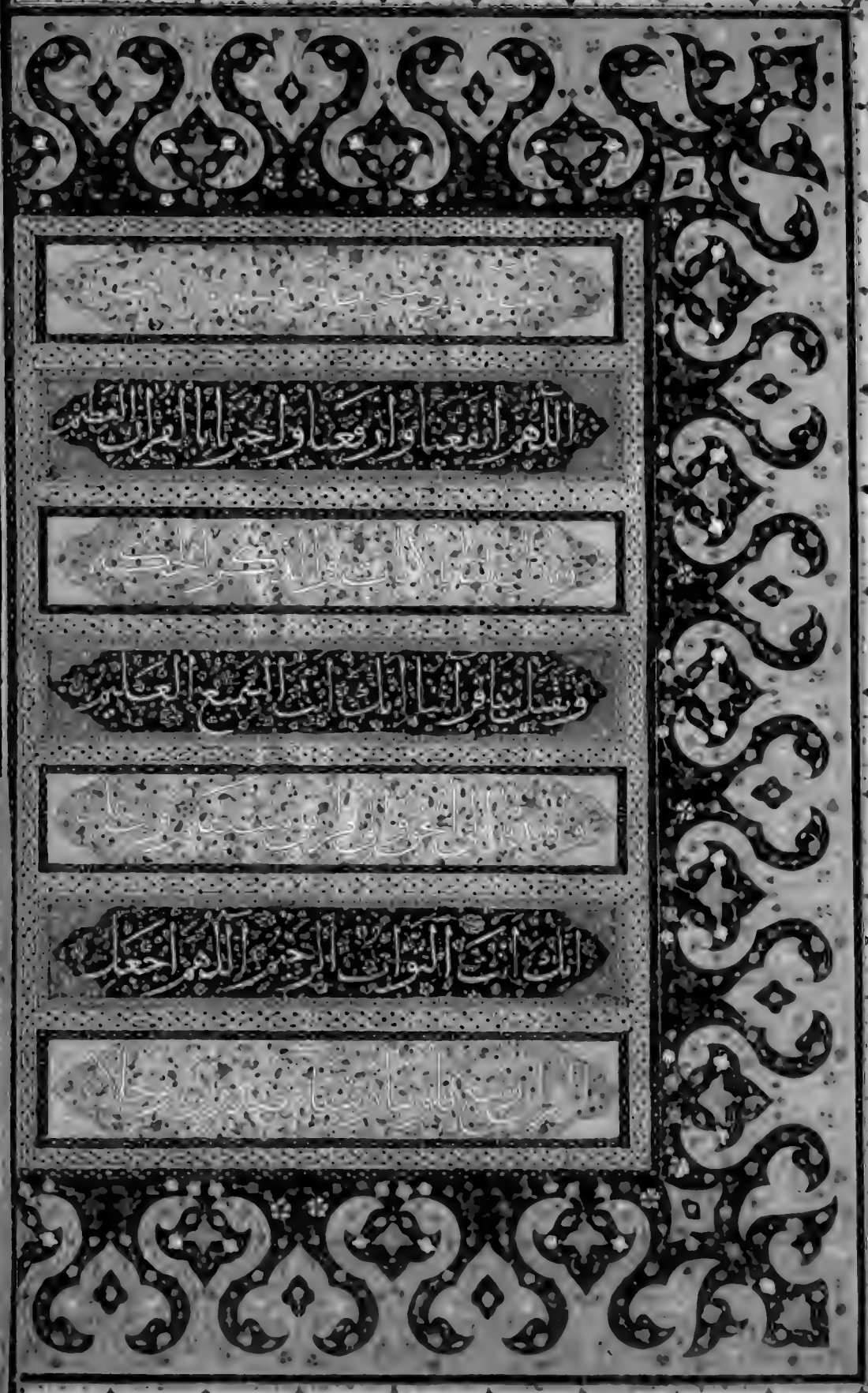
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ







بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

اللهم انت معارفنا ورفعا واجرنا ما اقرت العباد

والملائكة والانس والجن والحيوان والجمادات

وسائر المخلوقات انك ارحم الراحمين

اللهم انت الخالق والمهيمن والرازق والمحيي والمميت

انك انت الغني والفقير والذل والعلو والدم والحق

والعدل والبر والنجاة والرحمة والبركة والفضل

Vertical column of small, illegible text or marginalia on the right side of the page.







بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

اللهم انعمنا وارفعنا وارحمنا يا ذا الجلال والإكرام

اللهم انعمنا وارفعنا وارحمنا يا ذا الجلال والإكرام

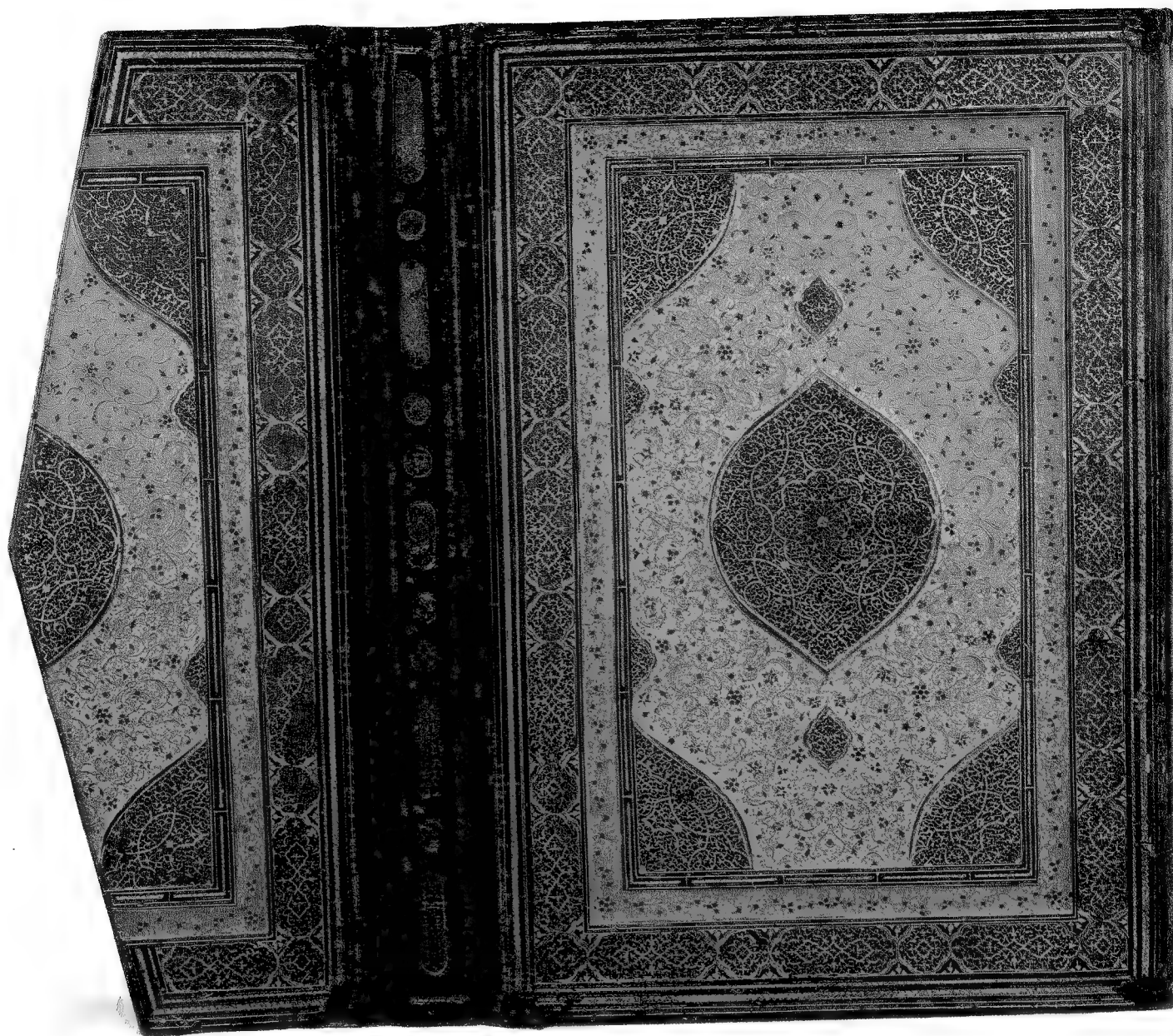
اللهم انعمنا وارفعنا وارحمنا يا ذا الجلال والإكرام

اللهم انعمنا وارفعنا وارحمنا يا ذا الجلال والإكرام

اللهم انعمنا وارفعنا وارحمنا يا ذا الجلال والإكرام

اللهم انعمنا وارفعنا وارحمنا يا ذا الجلال والإكرام





43 doublure

they occur in the *muḥaqqaq* or the *naskh* text. Verses are separated by rosettes in the *naskh* text and by stars within circles in the *muḥaqqaq* text. Groups of five and ten verses are marked in the margin by circles bearing the words *khamṣ* ('five') and *ʿaṣhar* ('ten') in *thulth*.

The Qur'anic text is followed by an illuminated opening containing a *duʿāʾ-i khātīm*, a prayer to be recited on concluding a reading of the Qur'an (folios 200b–201a). Written in white *muḥaqqaq*, it is set within decorated panels which are surrounded by a wide border of reciprocal trefoils identical to those above the heading of *Sūrat al-baqarah*. The final pages (folios 201b–203a) contain a short *fālnāmah*, a treatise on how to use the Qur'an for divination. It is in a very good *nastaʿlīq*, with prayers and Qur'anic quotations in *naskh*.

The black morocco covers have a central rectangular field decorated with a medallion with pendants. Both the field and the pendants are covered with a pattern of cloud and floral scrolls, all brushed with gilt. There is a border of surrounding cartouches containing Prophetic *ḥadīths*. Each is different, and would have required a separate metal stamp. The doublures are decorated in gold and blue. The main fields and inner borders are sunk and stamped, while the central medallions, corner-pieces and outer border are worked in paper filigree.

44

# Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, 16th century

192 folios, 23 × 16.5 cm, with

15 lines to the page

*Material* A lightly polished, rough cream paper with many inclusions and no visible details

*Text area* 15.4 × 11.5 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 0.7 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh and thulth, incidentals in a variety of free hands

*Documentation* A colophon

*Scribe* Perhaps Asadallah Kirmani

*Binding* Ottoman, 18th century

*Accession no.* QUR215

1. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace

Library, MS.Y2593; see Karatay

1962, cat.no.369.

This manuscript bears the signature of Asadallah Kirmani (*d* 1486), the teacher of the great Ottoman calligrapher Ahmed Karahisarî. If the manuscript is by Asadallah, it is of undoubted importance, as only one other example of a Qur'an by Asadallah is known.<sup>1</sup> However, the script is shaky and of poor quality and can hardly be that of a skilled calligrapher. Furthermore, the opening folios are illuminated in a mediocre Shirazi style of the 16th century. At some stage the scribe appears to have changed pens for the *thulth* lines, as the script becomes steadily thinner, but this could also have been due to careless sharpening of the nib.

There are 12 lines of *naskh* and three of *thulth* on each page, with the text divided into panels. Surah headings are in red. Textual divisions are indicated in the margins in red.

The brown morocco covers have a central medallion bearing a floral spray and two pendants. There is an outer border of multiple inscribed lines. The doublure is of green paper with mock medallions, pendants and corner-pieces outlined in gold and splashed with gold paint.







## Single-volume Qur'an

Shiraz, AH972/AD 1564–5

322 folios, 32 × 20 cm, with

14 lines to the page

*Material* A well-polished, cream  
wove paper*Text area* 22.4 × 12.3 cm*Interlinear spacing* 1.5 cm*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in thulth*Scribe* (Jamal al-Din) Husayn  
al-Fakhkhar al-Shirazi*Binding* An Iranian 'lacquer' cover  
of the 18th century*Documentation* A colophon and  
three notices regarding the  
calligrapher*Accession no.* QUR422*Comparative items* Tehran,  
Gulistan Library, MS. 44;<sup>1</sup> two items  
published by Bayani 1345–58, IV,  
no. 138; and Sotheby's 1985,  
lot no. 3181. Bayani 1329, no. 6, illustrated  
on p. 39; and Atabay 1351,  
pp. 89–91.

2. Qazi Ahmed–Minorsky p. 76.

3. Yazdani (1921) read the names in  
the Hyderabad inscriptions  
correctly as Ibn Jamal al-Din  
Husayn Jalal al-Din Muhammad,  
but Bilgrami (1927) later read them  
as Jamal al-Din Husayn ibn Jalal  
al-Din. I followed Bilgrami when I  
published the Muhammadquli  
Album (James 1987), but the  
correct form of the name can be  
read quite clearly on an  
unpublished page in the Polier  
Album (Berlin, Islamisches  
Museum, MS. 74,599, folio 36,  
K 26,11).4. He does not give the location of  
this manuscript, which may be in  
the Topkapı Palace Library.5. He does not give the shelfmark of  
these pages.

6. Bayani 1345–58, IV, nos 44–5.

The calligrapher of this Qur'an is mentioned in Qazi Ahmad's treatise, which was written about 1596.<sup>2</sup> According to this work, Husayn al-Fakhkhar al-Shirazi was descended from the *atabeg* rulers of Fars. The word *fakhkhār* means 'potter' or 'brick-maker', and neither of these occupations would have been incompatible with calligraphy, as ceramic tiles and bricks were often used to produce inscriptions. Until recently it was believed that Husayn al-Fakhkhar emigrated to the Deccan towards the end of the 16th century and worked there for the Qutbshahi sultans. It is now clear that it was his son Muhammad who worked in Hyderabad in the 1590s. Several mosques in the city have inscriptions by him.<sup>3</sup> Other manuscripts known to have been copied by Husayn al-Fakhkhar are a copy of the *Bahjat al-manāhij* dated 1545 which is now in the Gulistan Library; a copy of a work on traditions or the sayings of 'Ali dated 1562–3, which has been published by Bayani;<sup>4</sup> two album pages in the Topkapı Palace Library, also published by Bayani;<sup>5</sup> and a Qur'an sold at Sotheby's in 1985.

The manuscript opens with two large rosettes which contain verse 88 of *Sūrat al-isrā'* (XVII) and are surrounded by delicately painted blue motifs interspaced with gold floral sprays with large blossoms. The opening folios of text are fully illuminated, the main element being large arabesque scrolls. These have coloured blossoms and large gold leaves which often interlock with gold cloud scrolls. There is an outer border of reciprocal lappets with the same arabesque and cloud-scroll decoration. The opening verses of *Sūrat al-baqarah* (II) are surmounted by a fine head-piece and are set in cloud cartouches against a gold background decorated with polychrome flower scrolls.

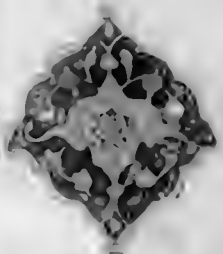
Surah titles are set in decorated cartouches within panels. The text was written out in an excellent *naskh* hand, with an even number of lines to the page, the normal practice favouring odd numbers. Each page is surrounded by a wide border of gold and coloured rules. Verses are separated by gold knots, while each fifth verse is indicated in the margin by a gold rosette with a central star, and each tenth verse is marked by a blue lozenge with a gold palmette. Reading notes are in red.

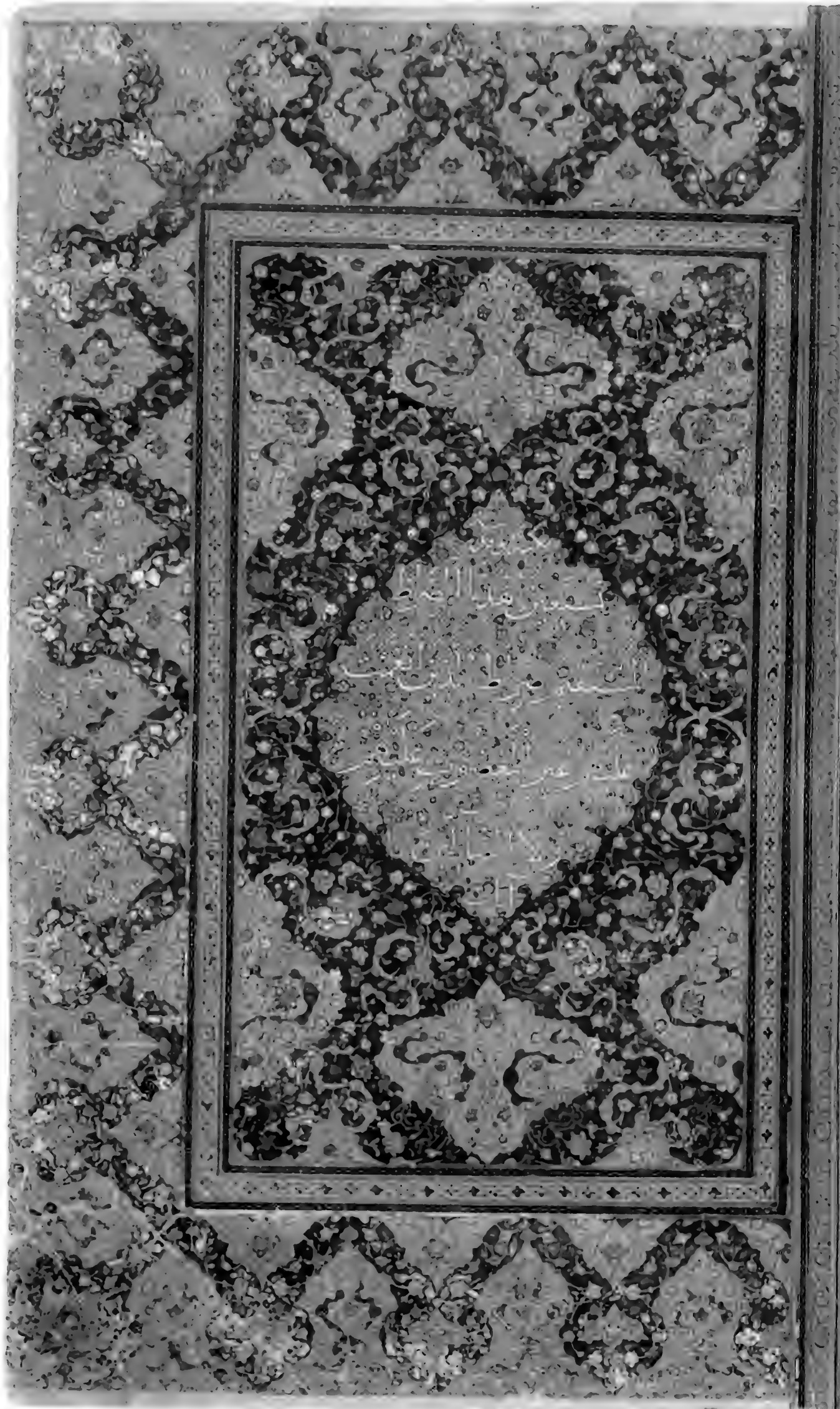
The main text is followed on folios 319b–320a by a prayer, with the colophon at the end, and a *fālnāmah* written in *nasta'liq*. On folio 320b there are three inscriptions in Persian, all confirming that the manuscript is by Husayn al-Fakhkhar. The first is signed by Ahmad Tabrizi, who is probably to be identified with one of the late 19th-century calligraphers of that name.<sup>6</sup>

The 'lacquered' covers have central medallions and pendants filled with floral decoration. The main field is wine-coloured, and there are two narrow outer borders filled with chains of flowers. The black doublures are also 'lacquered' and have gold rules along the edges.

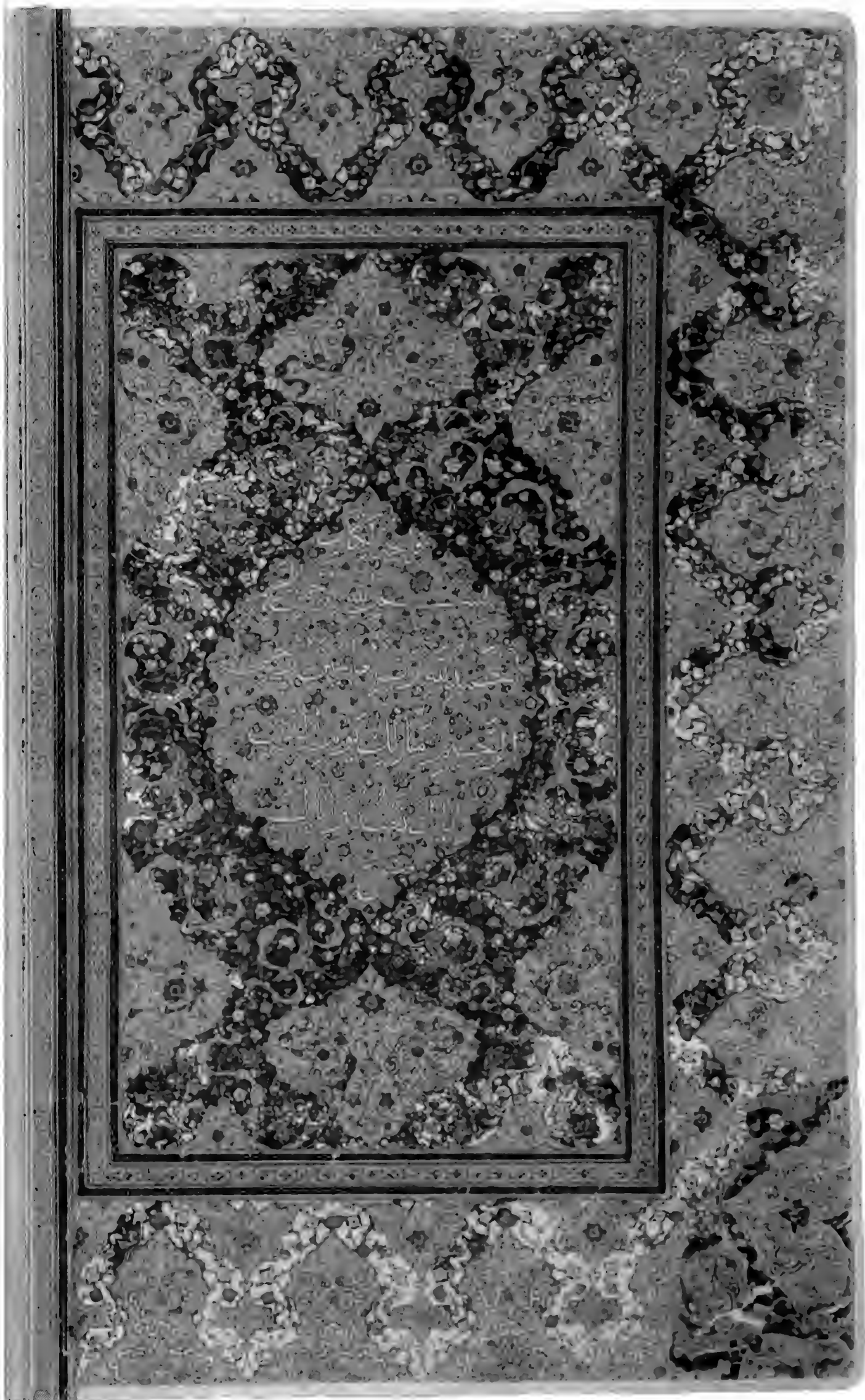


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَكَ لَارِيبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ  
الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ  
يُنْفِقُونَ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ  
قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ۝ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ  
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ  
أَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ  
وَعَلَىٰ أَسْمَاعِهِمْ لُحْوَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ عَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غُشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝  
وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ  
يُحَدِّثُونَ آلَهُمُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ آيَاتِهِمْ وَيَتَذَكَّرُونَ وَأَمَّا أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

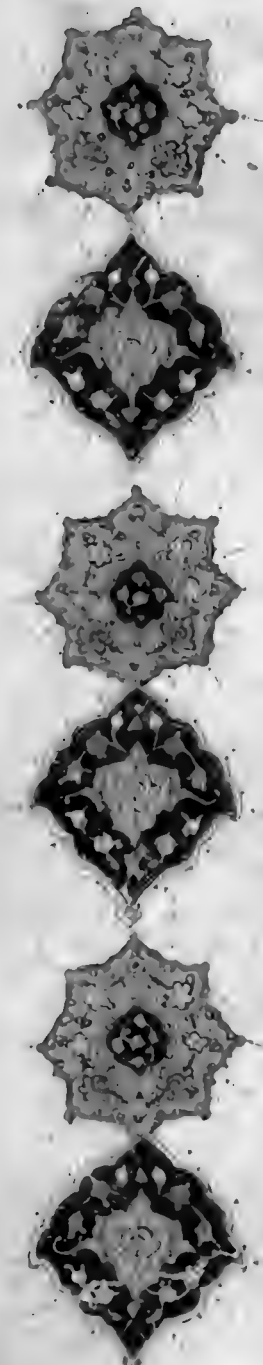






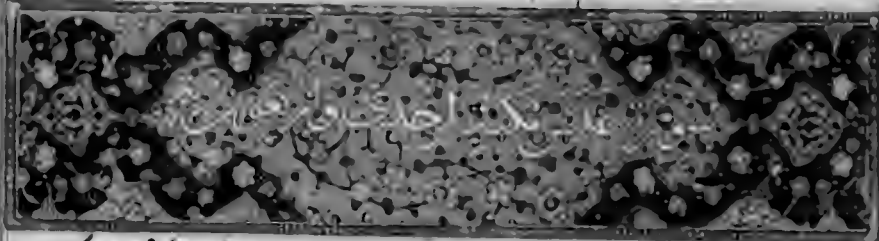


لَهُ قَدِّي وَمَا عَلَيْكَ الْإِزْكَى وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى  
 وَهُوَ يَخْشَى فَاذْكُرْهُ نَلْفَى كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ  
 فَمِنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرَهُ فِي صُحُفٍ مُكَرَّمَةٍ مَرْفُوعَةٍ  
 مُطَهَّرَةٍ بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ قِيلَ الْإِنْسَانُ  
 مَا أَكْفَرُهُ مِنْ إِشْيَءٍ خَلَقْتُهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ خَلَقْتُهُ  
 فَقَدَرْتُهُ ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ سَيَّرْتُهُ ثُمَّ أَمَانَةً فَاغْبِثْ ثُمَّ إِذَا  
 شَاءَ أَنْشَرْتُهُ كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرْتُ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ  
 إِلَى طَعَامِهِ أَنَا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ  
 شَقًّا فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا وَعَبْنَا وَقَضًا وَزَيْتُونًا  
 وَنَخْلًا وَحَدَانًا وَغُلًّا وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَ  
 لِأَهْلَائِكُمْ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاعَةُ يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ  
 مِنْ أَخِيهِ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ لِكُلِّ  
 امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ وَجُجٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُسْفَرَةٌ  
 ضَا حَكَّةٌ مُسْتَبْشِرَةٌ وَجُجٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ





لَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا ۖ وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا ۖ  
 أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا ۖ وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَاهَا ۖ مَتَّاعًا  
 لَكُمْ وَلِأَنفَامِكُمْ ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَةُ الْكُبْرَىٰ  
 يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَىٰ ۖ وَبُرْزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِمَنْ بَرَىٰ  
 فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ ۖ وَآثَرَ الْحَيَوةَ الدُّنْيَا ۖ فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ  
 وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۖ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ  
 هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۖ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا ۖ قُلْ إِنَّمَا  
 أُنذِرُكُمْ بِهَا ۖ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مَسْهَاهَا ۖ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرُ مَنْ  
 يَخْشَاهَا ۖ كَانَتْهُمْ يَوْمَ يُرَوُّهَا لِئَلَيْسُوا بِالْعَاشِيَةِ أَوْضَحَاهَا



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ۖ أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَىٰ ۖ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَنُّكَ  
 أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَىٰ ۖ أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَفْنَىٰ ۖ فَإِنَّكَ

46

## Single-volume Qur'an

Shiraz or Qazvin, 16th century

452 folios, 27 × 18.5 cm, with

13 lines to the page

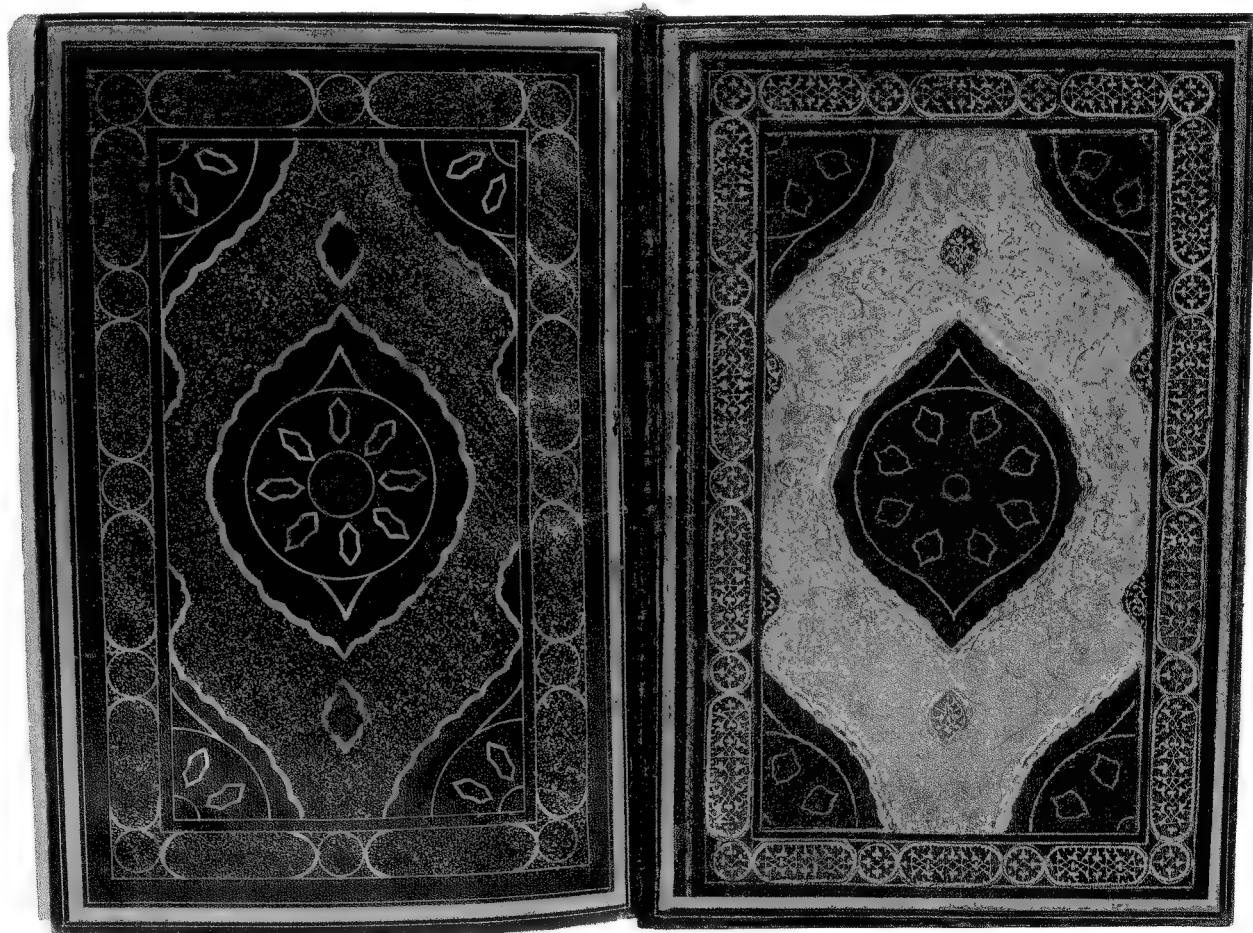
*Material* A cream paper, laid, with

6 lines to the centimetre

*Text area* 15.5 × 8.5 cm*Interlinear spacing* 1 cm*Script* The main text in a combination of muḥaqqaq and naskh, incidentals in riqā'*Binding* 16th or 17th century*Accession no.* QUR231

The first opening displays *Sūrat al-fātiḥah* (I) written within lozenge-shaped fields, with narrow panels on either side. Other panels above and below the text contain *Sūrat al-wāqī'ah* (LVI), verses 77–80, and there is an outer border of reciprocal lappets. The details of the palmettes and scrolls are finely articulated. *Sūrat al-baqarah* (II) commences with an illuminated head-piece, and the text is set against a gold ground decorated with floral sprays.

The remainder of the text is set in five panels. The top and bottom panels contain one line of blue *muḥaqqaq*; the central panels have one line of gold *muḥaqqaq*; and the two remaining panels contain five lines of *naskh* in black. Surah headings are in *riqā'* and are set within



46 doublure &amp; end-paper

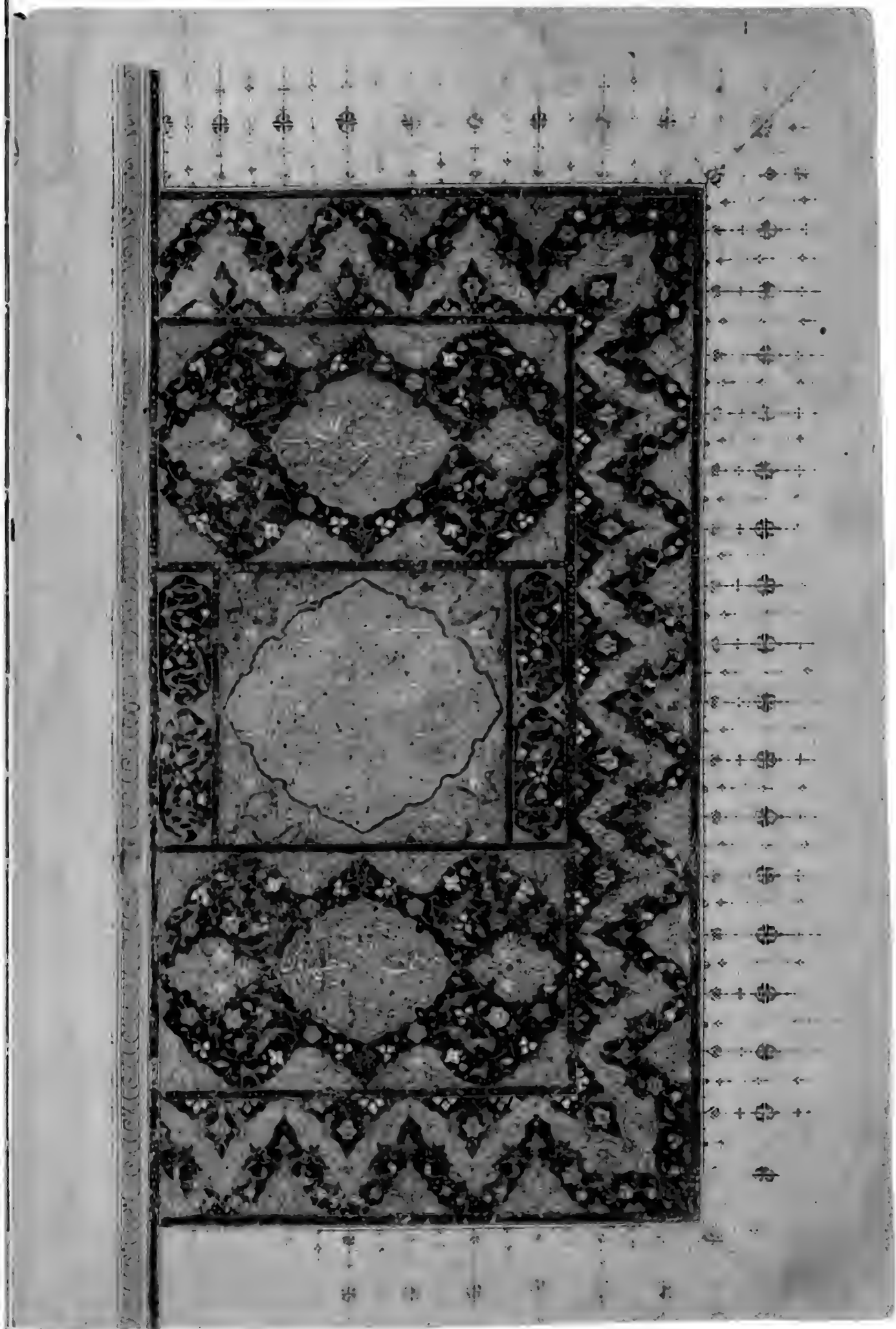
decorated panels. Each group of ten verses is marked in the margin by a medallion containing a schematic floral spray, and the *juz'* and *ḥizb* divisions are also noted in the margins. At the end of the manuscript there is a prayer written in *rayḥān* and a panel prepared for a *fālnāmah*.

The covers have been brushed with gold, and the decorated portions are sunk. These include the main fields, which have central medallions with pendants and all-embracing arabesque and cloud-scroll decoration. The same pattern occurs in the inner borders, which consist of









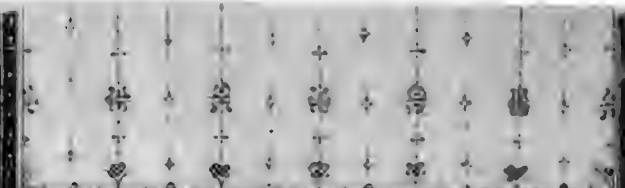
وَمَا الشَّعْرُ وَزَيْلُ قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَإِنْ

مَرْضَاوَهُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ  
وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا  
نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ مَا أَتَاهُمْ مِنْهُ الْمُسْدُونَ وَلَكِنْ  
لَا يَشْعُرُونَ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ امْنُوا كَمَا آمَرَ النَّاسُ  
قَالُوا الْوَيْلُ لَنَا مِنْ الشَّهَادَةِ إِلَّا أَنْهُمْ هُمُ

الشَّهَادَةُ لَكُلِّ الْأُمَّةِ وَاللَّهُ

مُنَوَّالُوا أَمَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شِيَاطِينِهِمْ  
قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزَؤُونَ اللَّهُ يَشْفِي  
بِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبُهُمْ فِي طَعْنَانِهِمْ يَعْنِيهِمْ أُولَٰئِكَ  
الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوْا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهَدْيِ فَأَرْجَعَتْ  
تَحَارَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ مَلَهُمْ كَيْدٌ

الَّذِي السَّبْقُ قَدْ رَأَوْا فَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الَّذِي هَدَىٰ لِلنَّبِيِّينَ  
الَّذِينَ يَوْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا  
رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ يَوْمِنُونَ بِمَا  
أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمِمَّا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ

يَوْمِنُونَ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ مِلَّةِ رَسُولٍ

وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُطْلَقُونَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ  
عَلَيْهِمْ أُنْذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ  
حَدَّثَنَا اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ  
رِجَافٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ وَمَنْ يَنْتَظِرْ يَوْمَ  
الْحِسَابِ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ يَوْمِنُونَ

اللَّهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يُخْلَعُونَ



cartouches separated by gold dots in the form of pyramids with gold finials. Narrow panels above and below the main fields are decorated with floral scrolls, and there are outer borders of chain-link stamps. Along the spine there is a double line of *saz* leaves, which suggests that the gilding and the painted gilt decoration were added in Ottoman times.

The sunk main fields of the doublures are ornamented with cloud and floral scrolls in the Safavid fashion of the 16th century and have been brushed with gold. The central medallions, corner-pieces and cartouche borders all have paper filigree decoration. At some stage blue leather end-papers have been added. They are painted in gold with a mirror-image of the doublure decoration.

## 47

### Single-volume Qur'an

Iran or India, *circa* 1575–1600

360 folios, 42.5 × 25.2 cm, with 11 lines to the page

*Material* A fine, thin, lightly polished buff paper, laid, with 6–7 lines to the centimetre; the paper on which the text has been written is sprinkled with gold but seems to be the same as that of the margins

*Text area* 26.5 × 14.3 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 2.5 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh, incidentals in thulth

*Scribe* 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Modern

*Accession no.* QUR248

*Comparative items* Mashhad, Astan-i Quds Library, MSS 106 and 291.<sup>1</sup>

1. Ma'ani 1347, cat.nos 89 and 88.

The scribe of this manuscript, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni, was a native of Shiraz who emigrated to India to work for the Qutbshahi sultans of Golconda at the end of the 16th century. Several manuscripts in his hand exist, some of which bear the seals of Qutb Shahs. Two undated Qur'ans by him now in the Astan-i Quds Library in Mashhad are inscribed with endowment notices made out in the names of two members of the dynasty. The first was made *waqf* by Ibrahim Qutb Shah in 1562–3, and the second by 'Abdallah Qutb Shah in 1641–2. Cat. 47 has certainly been in India at some stage and may well have been copied there, although the style of the illumination is that of late 16th-century Iran.

The manuscript opens with a pair of medallions which have been left blank. The text of the opening surah is spread over two pages and is surrounded by a border of reciprocal lappets with floral sprays on a blue ground, while *Sūrat al-baqarah* (11) begins with an elaborate head-piece. Surah titles are in blue *thulth* and are set within illuminated panels. The script is an unusual *naskh* in which the final letters *nūn* and *yā'* are greatly extended. The pages are surrounded by heavy orange, green and gold rules. Verses are separated by a variety of devices, mostly fine star shapes. Each group of ten verses is marked after the Indian fashion by the letter *'ayn* (for *'ashar*, 'ten') in the margin. Larger textual divisions are marked by elaborate marginal medallions.



سورة فاتحة

سورة فاتحة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ  
إِنَّا أَنْتَ قَبْدُؤُنَاكَ

البيات

سورة

ع

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ۝ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ۝ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا  
 وَقَبَ ۝ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ۝ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ۝

سُورَةُ الْاِسْخَارِ مِائَتِ اَيَاتٍ

ع

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ۝ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ۝ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ ۝  
 مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ ۝ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ  
 النَّاسِ ۝ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ۝

كِتَابُ مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ

سُورَةُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بَنَتْ يَدَايَهِ لَهَا وَبَتَّ ۝ مَا لَغْنَعْنَاهُ مَالَهُ وَمَا كَسَبَتْ  
سَيْضَلِي نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ۝ وَأَمْرًا لَهُ خَمَالَهُ لُحْطٍ فِي جِدِّهَا حُلَمٌ مَسْدٌ

سُورَةُ الْاِخْلَاصِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

فَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

سُورَةُ الْفَلَقِ

## Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, *circa* 1550–1600

247 folios, 38.8 × 24 cm, with

15 lines to the page

*Material* A polished cream paper, laid, with 7 lines to the centimetre; the area under the text has been sprinkled with gold

*Text area* 24.5 × 14 cm*Interlinear spacing* 1.2 cm

*Script* The main text in a combination of muḥaqqāq, thulth and naskh, incidentals in riqā'

*Binding* Contemporary*Accession no.* QUR206

*Comparative item* Goswamy & Fischer 1987, cat.no. 30

1. See, for example, the background to a piece of calligraphy decorated *circa* 1640 (Goswamy & Fischer 1987, cat.no. 30).

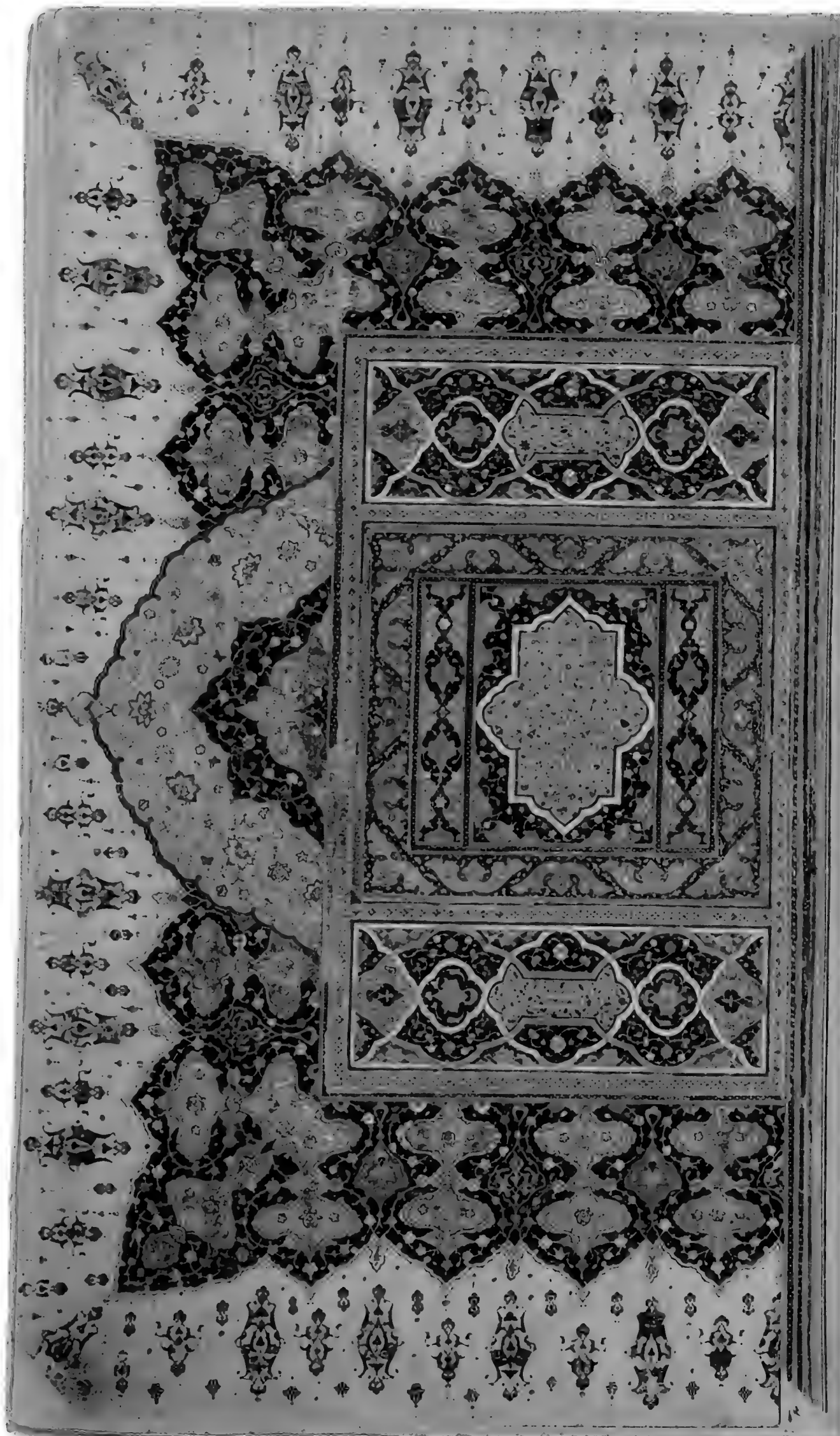
This Qur'an is a typical example of those produced in Iran in the second half of the 16th century, but the first four pages of text and the final folios show signs of having been redecorated in India during the time of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (*reg* 1628–58). The illumination on these pages is far superior to that in the rest of the manuscript and is very close to that of album pages from about 1640.<sup>1</sup> It may have been added at the same time as a false colophon in the name of Yaquṭ al-Musta'simī.

The text area on each page of text is divided into five panels: those at the top and bottom contain one line of large *muḥaqqāq*; the middle panel contains one line of large *thulth*; and the remaining two contain six lines of *naskh*. The panels of *naskh* are narrower, and the spaces at either end are filled with arabesque scrolls. There are coloured rules around the text, and the surah headings are written in different colours over simple floral grounds. Verses are separated by gold discs with blue dots. Tenth and fifth verses are indicated by circular medallions. These are identical apart from the gold point and blue finials of the markers for groups of ten verses. Pages which contain the beginning of a *juz'* are fully illuminated, with floral scrolls in the margins and the text in cartouches over gold. Otherwise, textual divisions are written in the margins.

The black morocco covers have sunk central medallions and corner-pieces with gold fields which were originally richly decorated with floral motifs, also in gold. The doublures are of red morocco painted with large gold blossoms on arabesque scrolls in a Safavid style of the latter part of the 16th century. The central medallions and corner-pieces are decorated with gold filigree on a blue ground.











وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ خَادِعُونَ

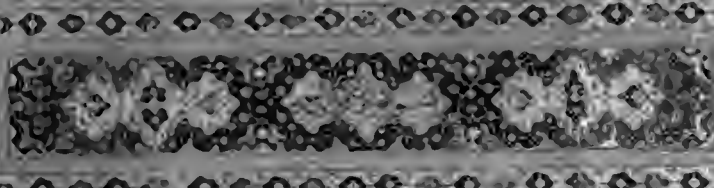
والذين آمنوا وما عذبوا إلا أنفهم وأبصر رؤوف لهم من  
وإذ قال الله ربنا وكن عذابنا لهم ما كانوا يكذبون  
وإذ قال لهم لا تعبدوا في الأرض إلا الله على  
الأنهم هم المعبودون ولكن لا تعبدون وإذ قيل  
لهم آمنوا كما آمن الناس قالوا أنؤمن كما آمن السفهاء  
الأنهم هم السفهاء ولكن لا يعلمون وإذ قالوا

أَمْ نُولِى الْأَمْثَالَ إِذَا خَلَقَ الشَّيَاطِينَ

١٠  
 وَلَوْ أَنَّمَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا خَرَسْتُمْ فِيهِمْ  
 وَيَدْعُوهُمْ فِي طَعَامِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ  
 أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ شَرَفُوا  
 الشَّيْءَ الْخَبِيرَ فَأَرْجَمَتْ خُبْرَهُمْ وَمَصَّاهُمْ  
 مِثْلَهُ كَمِثْلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْفَدْنَا رَافِعًا أَصْلًا  
 مَا جِئَ بِهِ  
 دَمَ اللَّهِ بَوْمَهُمْ وَرَكَّهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَا يُصْرُونَ  
 سَمِيعٌ عَلَيْهِمْ لَاحِظُونَ أَوَّلَ حَشَىٰ مِنْ  
 السَّمَاءِ

فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَّرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ مَجْمَعُونَ





الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم مالك يوم الدين اياك نعبد و اياك نستعين اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين انعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم

# ولا الضالين

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
 ان ذلك الكتاب لا ريب فيه هدى للمتقين الذين يؤمنون بالغيب ويقيمون  
 الصلوة و مما رزقناهم ينفقون و الذين يؤمنون بما نزل اليك و بما نزل  
 من قبلك و الا انهم يؤمنون اولئك على هدى من ربهم و اولئك هم  
 المفلحون ان الذين هم في صياحهم غافلون و على الله قلوبهم و على ابصارهم غشاوة و هم  
 لا يرجعون

## عذاب عظيم و من الناس فريقان بال

49

## Part 21 of a 30-part Qur'an

Iran, AH 979/AD 1571

18 folios, 35.3 × 24 cm, with

11 lines to the page

*Material* A polished cream paper, laid, with an indeterminate number of lines per centimetre*Text area* 20.5 × 13 cm*Interlinear spacing* 1.5 cm*Script* A combination of thulth and naskh, with incidentals in thulth*Scribe* 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Muqaddam*Documentation* A colophon*Binding* Contemporary*Accession no.* QUR625*Comparative item* Cat. 51;and a Qur'an in the Museum of Turkish & Islamic Arts, Istanbul.<sup>1</sup>

1. Bayani 1345–58, IV, no. 328, where the shelfmark is not recorded.

Two other Qur'ans copied by 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Muqaddam are known. One, cat. 51 below, is dated 1585. The second is a large, undated copy in the Museum of Turkish & Islamic Arts in Istanbul.

The text begins with an illuminated head-piece. The surah headings are in gold *thulth* within illuminated panels. Each page is divided into five panels. The first, third and fifth contain one line of gold *thulth* with black vocalization but no outline. The second and fourth panels contain four lines of a smaller, well-formed *naskh*. The panels of *naskh* are narrower and are flanked by panels of gold arabesque. The text is framed by gold, green and orange rules. Verses are marked by segmented gold discs with red centres, and groups of ten verses are marked by a floral whirl on blue framed by a gold border.

The covers have central medallions and corner-pieces decorated with floral scrolls, cloud bands and palmettes, all brushed with gold. The borders contain cartouches with *ḥadīths* proclaiming the virtues of reading the Qur'an. The doublures are of brown morocco with central medallions and corner-pieces decorated with gold filigree over coloured grounds.

50

## Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, AH 972/AD 1564–5

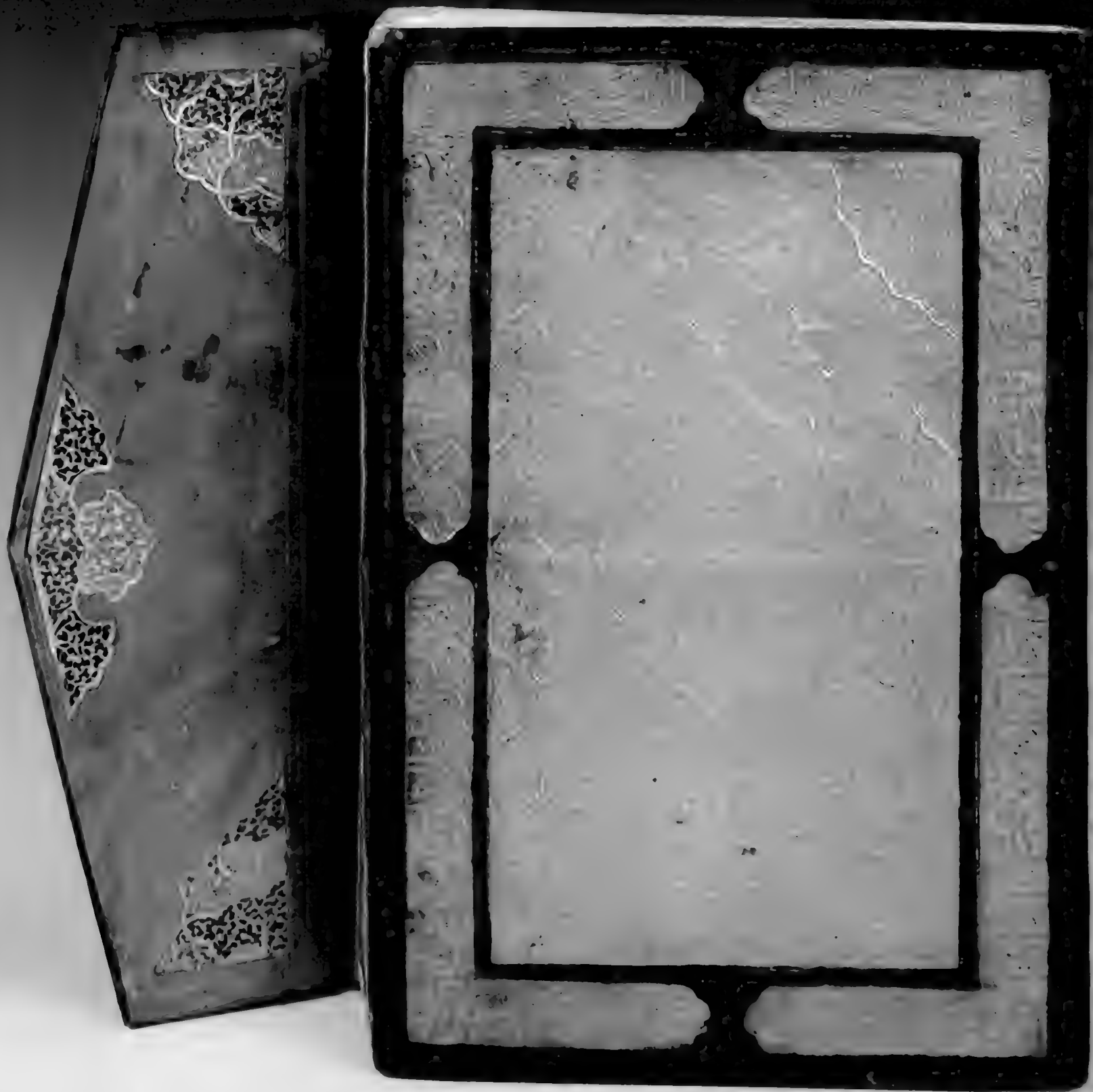
249 folios, 35 × 25 cm, with

15 lines to the page

*Material* A cream paper, laid, with an indeterminate number of lines per centimetre*Text area* 20.8 × 14.2 cm*Interlinear spacing* 1.2 cm*Script* The main text in a combination of muḥaqqaq, thulth and naskh, incidentals in thulth*Scribe* Muzaffar ibn Ahmad ibn Muzaffar ibn Kamal ibn 'Iwad ibn Muzaffar ibn Shams al-Din Hasan Amirah ibn Nasir al-Din Muhammad al-Tusi*Documentation* A colophon*Binding* Contemporary, identical to that of cat. 49

The scribe of this Qur'an, a descendant of the famous scholar Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (*d* 1293), proudly gives his genealogy in the colophon. The manuscript opens with two medallions containing *Sūrat al-isrā'* (XVII), verse 88, a frontispiece and an illuminated opening containing the first two pages of text. On subsequent pages the text is arranged in five panels. On the right-hand page of each opening, the first and fifth panels contain a line of gold *muḥaqqaq*, and the third contains a line of blue *thulth*. Neither script is outlined, but both are vocalized in black. On the left-hand page, the gold *muḥaqqaq* is replaced by blue *thulth* and *vice versa*. On both pages the narrower second and fourth panels contain six lines of *naskh* in black and are flanked by vertical panels with floral lozenges similar to those used to mark divisions of the text. Gold discs separate the verses, and the margins are ruled in gold and colours. Reading notes are in red.

The black morocco covers have stamped panels of gilt leather overlay and borders inscribed with *ḥadīths*. The doublures are of brown morocco, with central medallions and corner-pieces of gold filigree on coloured grounds.



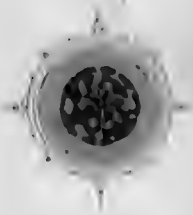
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ  
عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا  
نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ  
الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً

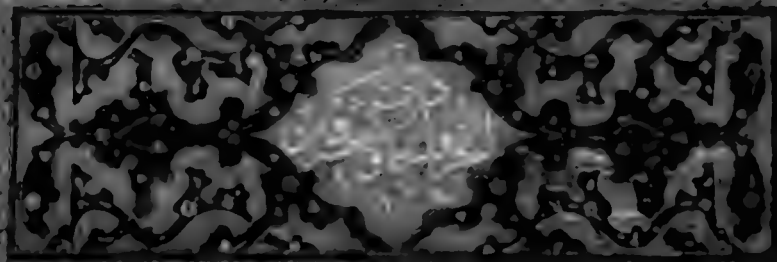
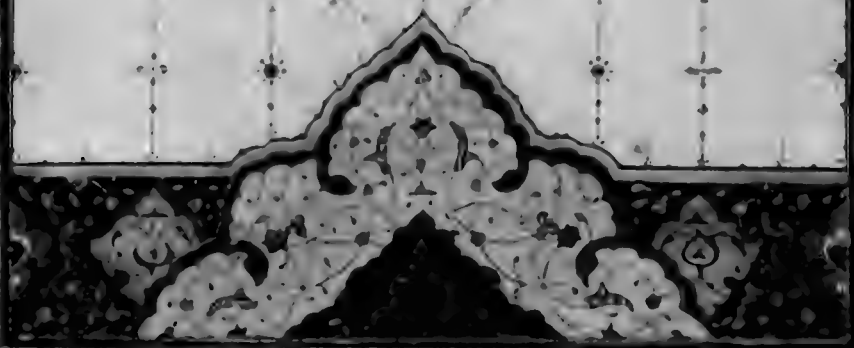
وَذِكْرًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣﴾

وَيَنْتَظِمُ شَهِيدًا يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ  
الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَوْلَا  
أَجَلٌ سَبَقَ لِحَاجَتِهِمْ الْعَذَابَ وَلَيَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بَغْضَةُ

وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥﴾







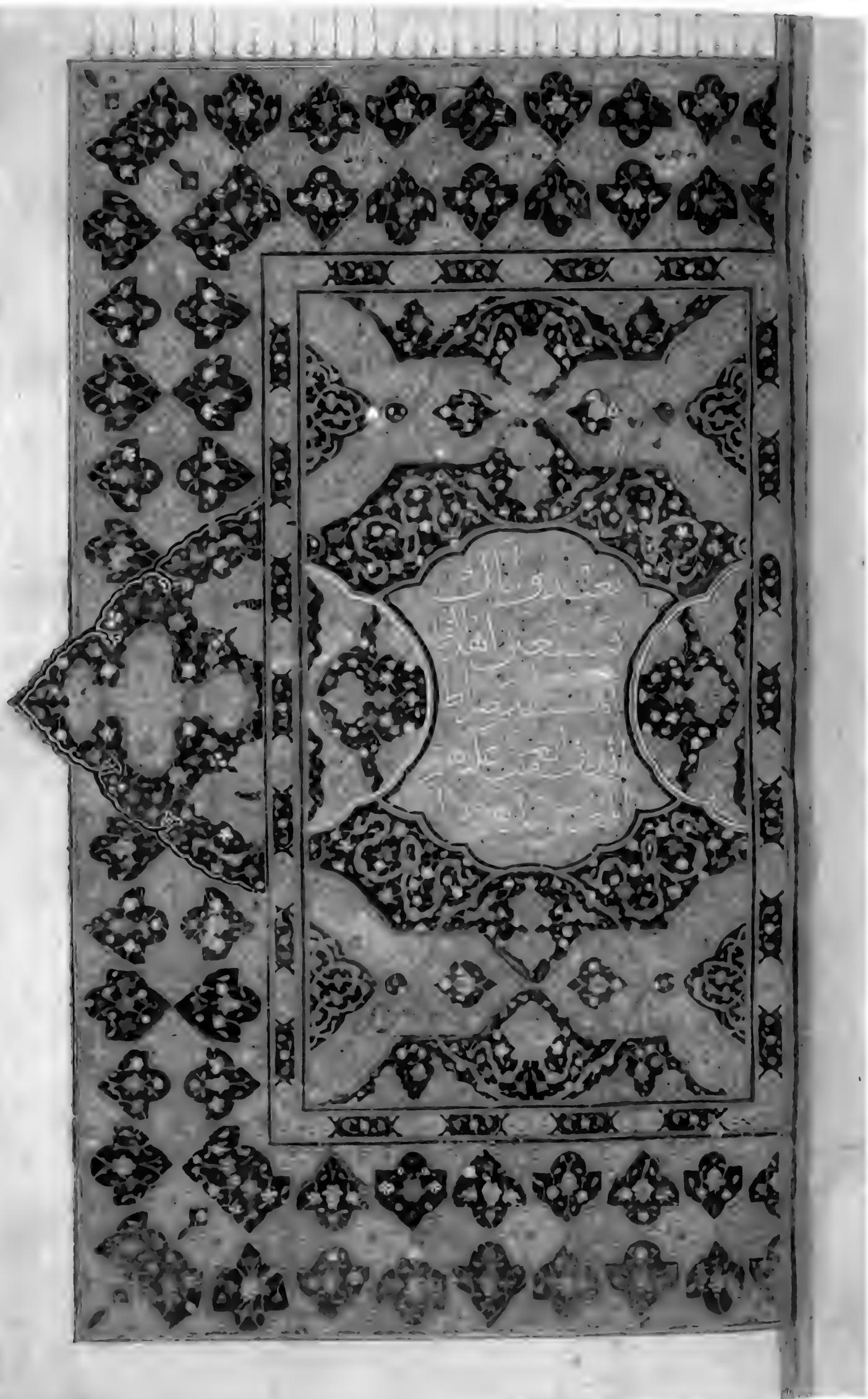
وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ  
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ

النَّبَاُ وَإِلَّا الْيَكْرُوتُ وَالْمُكْرُوتُ

وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ  
فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُمُ الْكِتَابُ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمِنْ  
هُؤُلَاءِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الْكَافِرُونَ  
وَمَا كُنْتَ تَسْلُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ

مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ إِنْ لَمْ يَنْزِلْ بِهَذَا الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا كَذِبًا

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 تَبَّتْ يَدَايَ الْوَحْشِ وَتَبَّتْ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَتْ سِوَالَهُ  
 وَأَتَتْ خَيْبَ وَأَمْرَانَهُ جَالَهُ الْحُطْبِ لِحَيْدِهَا خَيْبَ مَوْسِدِ  
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ  
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا طَلَقَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا عَسَى أَنْ يَأْخُذَ بِنُفْسٍ  
 شَرِّ مَا سَدَّ  
 أَذَاهُ  
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْثَّالِثِينَ مَلِكِ الْثَّالِثِينَ إِلَهِ الْثَّالِثِينَ مِنْ شَرِّ  
 مَا يَدْعُونَ



51

## Single-volume Qur'an

Karbala', AH993/AD1585

302 folios, 20.5 × 13 cm, with  
15 lines to the page

*Material* The text is on a deep  
buff paper, which is probably  
wove; the margins are made of  
an off-white paper, laid, with 10  
lines to the centimetre

*Text area* 12.5 × 7 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 0.8 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh, the  
incidentals in thulth

*Scribe* 'Ali ibn Muhammad  
ibn Muqaddam

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Modern

*Accession no.* QUR96

*Comparative item* Cat. 49

1. See cat. 49 above.

This is one of the three Qur'ans known to have been copied by this calligrapher.<sup>1</sup> It was copied in the Shi'ite holy city of Karbala' in Iraq, which at this time belonged to the Ottoman empire, forming part of the province of Baghdad. Two years before this manuscript was copied, Ali Paşa, the governor of Baghdad, had begun to restore the tomb of al-Husayn in Karbala', which, like that of al-Husayn's father, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, was a centre of Shi'ite pilgrimage. It was probably as a pilgrim that 'Ali ibn Muhammad went to Karbala', although it is not

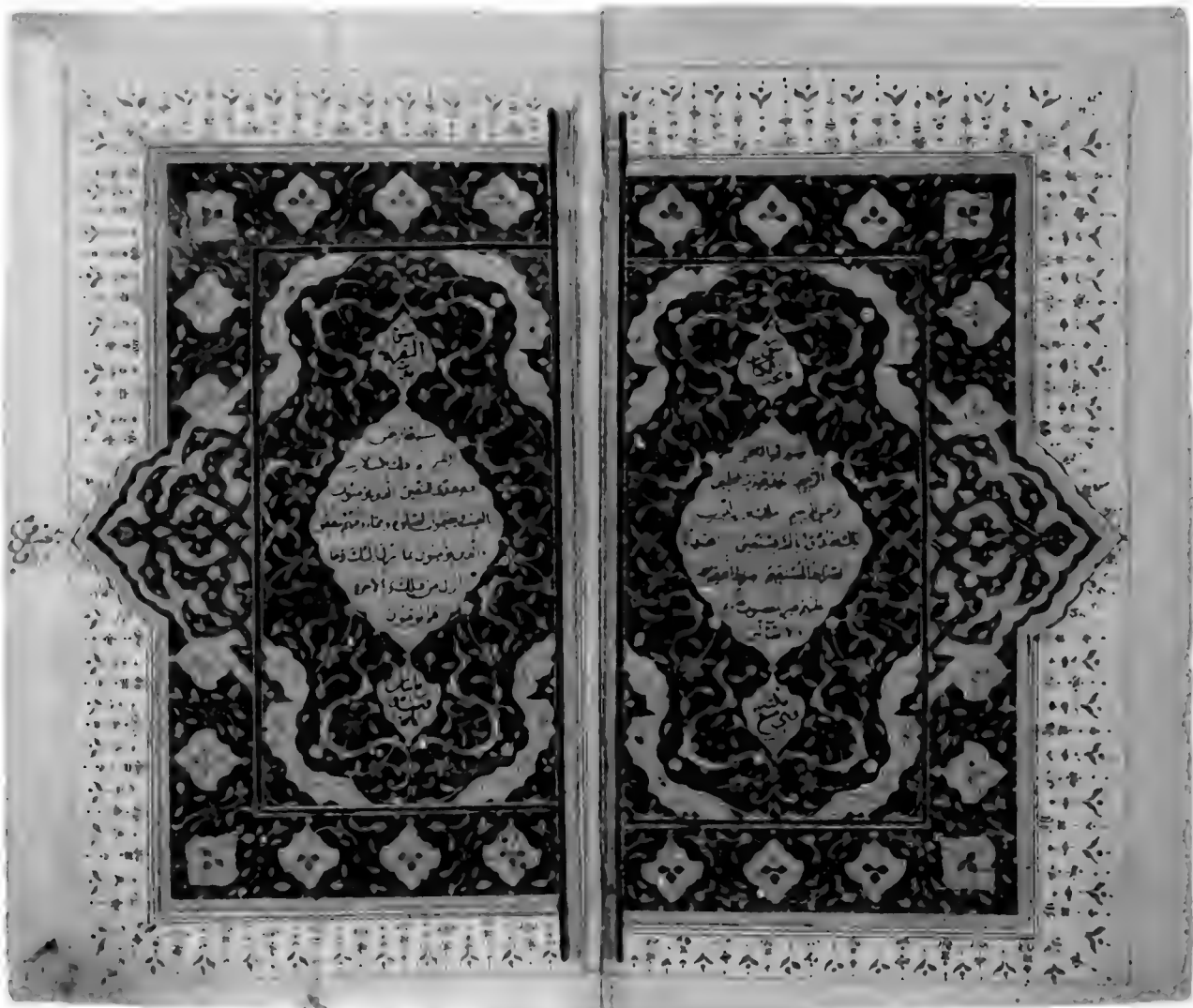


\*51 folio 1a (detail)

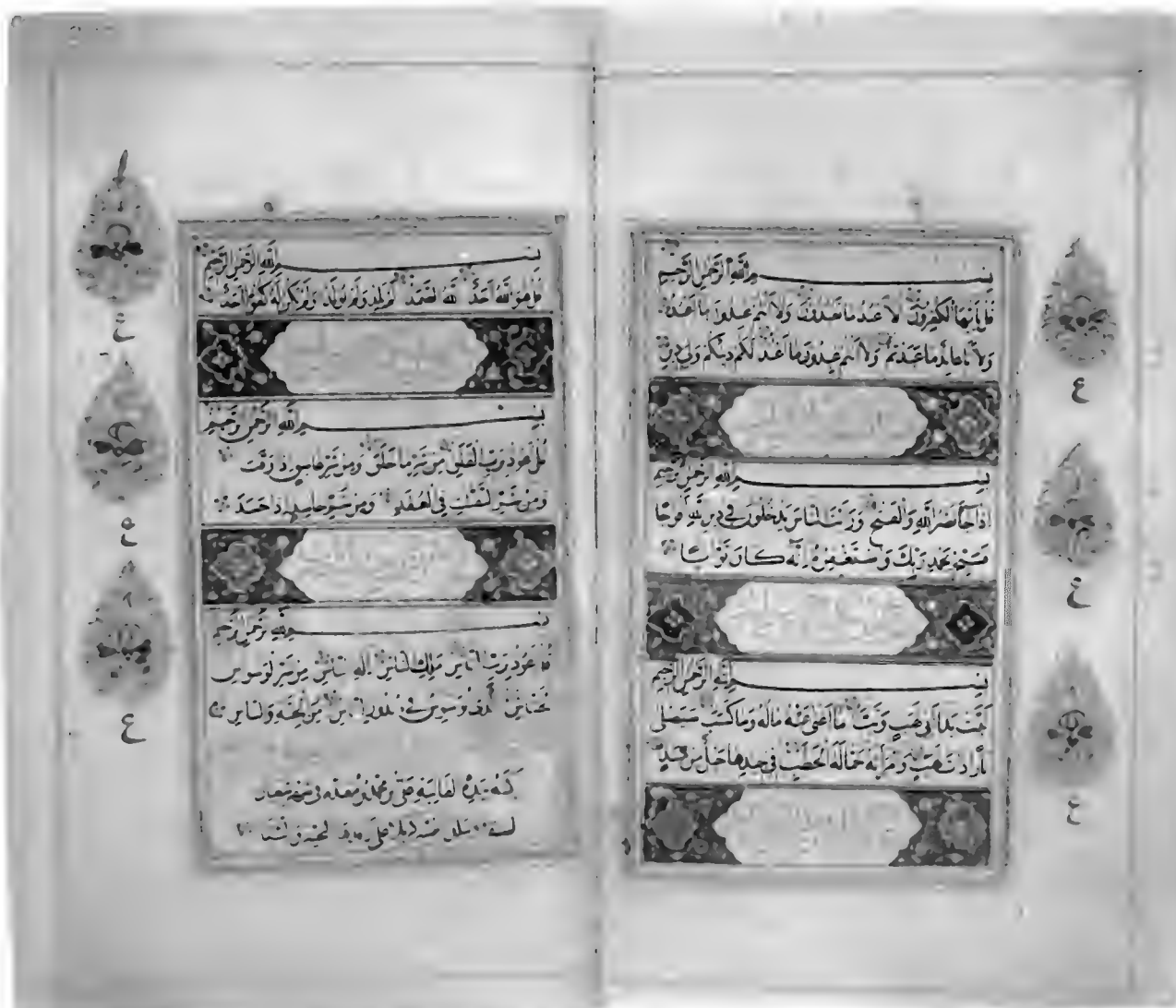
clear whether he was a Persian-speaking Shi'ite or an Arab from Iraq, where a large portion of the population are of the Shi'ite persuasion. In the 17th century this manuscript belonged to an official of the Mughal emperor Awrangzeb (*reg* 1658–1707) and bears a slightly damaged seal dated 1681.

The opening pages are illuminated in a competent but provincial Safavid style. The most notable features of the frontispiece are the large hasps which project into the vertical border and bear a red and blue palmette motif. Surah headings are in gold *thulth* and are set within illuminated panels. There are blue and gold rules around the text on each page, and the margins are made of grey paper. The verses are separated by gold discs with red and blue dots. The marginalia indicating groups of five and ten verses are probably later additions.





51 folios 1b-2a



52 folios 301b-302a

# Late Sultanate and Early Mughal India

The sultanate of Delhi, which had formed the core of Muslim power in India since the beginning of the 13th century and had given the name 'Sultanate' to the following three centuries of Indian Islamic history, was reduced to the status of a petty lordship in the wake of Timur's invasion of 1398–9. Although revived by the Afghan Lodi dynasty in the second half of the 15th century, Delhi had too many powerful rivals elsewhere in the subcontinent to claim a leading role, and it was not until the end of the 16th century that the region once again became the seat of the greatest Islamic power in southern Asia. The first step in this process was the victory of the Timurid adventurer Prince Babur at the battle of Panipat in 1526. Babur's forces swept the Lodi regime aside and laid the foundations for the Mughal dynasty, which was to dominate most of India in the 17th and 18th centuries. It was another 25 years before the new dynasty – called the Mughals because of the Timurids' claim to be descended from the Mongol khans – was properly established, and it was not until the latter half of the reign of the emperor Akbar (1556–1605) that the Mughals had a firm enough base in the North and North-west for them to expand into other regions and to establish a state that rivalled those of the Safavids and the Ottomans.

Akbar was eager to secure the survival of his dynasty by eliminating or subjugating all political rivals and by deliberately cultivating his Hindu subjects. His policy of peaceful coexistence led him to form marital and political alliances with powerful Rajput princes who were potential sources of discontent and rebellion and to employ Hindus at all levels of the administration of the empire. The same principle was reflected in Akbar's cultural policy, for both Hindu and Muslim artists were employed in his court studio. Working side by side, they produced some of the finest illustrated manuscripts of the Mughal period, in which Iranian and Indian elements coalesced to form a distinctive Mughal style. Many of the best artists who worked for this emperor came to India from Iran with his father, Humayun, when Humayun returned from exile there in 1555. Although the miniature painters who came from Iran had to adapt their calligraphic style of painting, with its highly decorated surface, to a new, naturalistic manner in which muted colours were employed, illuminators do not seem to have been constrained in this way.

From the surviving evidence, it appears that few Qur'ans of any quality were produced in India in the 16th century. One reason for this may have been the great many Qur'ans imported into India from Iran, to judge by the number of copies produced in Iran in the 16th century that are now in Indian libraries and museums. Other examples now in collections outside India bear seals and inscriptions that show that they once belonged to Indian rulers or their subjects. The most notable example in the Khalili Collection is cat. 43 above, a splendid Qur'an that seems to have been acquired by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in the second quarter of the 16th century. A more modest example is cat. 51 above, which was produced in the Shi'ite centre of Karbala' in Iraq in 1585 and belonged to an official of the emperor Awrangzeb a century later. A Qur'an in London bears an inscription associating it with the 'Sultan of Lahore', that is Akbar,<sup>1</sup> but it is unlikely that it was made in India. Indeed, Akbar does not appear to have commissioned a single copy of the Qur'an during his 50-year reign, in the course of which he grew steadily less sympathetic to the faith of his forebears.

Until Akbar's conquests, a number of other Muslim states ringed the sultanate of Delhi. These included Bengal to the east, Gujarat to the west, Khandesh to the south and Kashmir to the north. In the Deccan the main power was the Bahmanids of Bidar, although the death of the last of their line in 1527 led to the dissolution of the Bahmanid state and its replacement

by five rival sultanates, three of which were ruled by Shi'ites. One of these was the Qutbshahi sultanate of Golconda, whose founder was an immigrant from Iran of Qaraqoyunlu descent. The strong links between the Qutbshahis and their fellow Shi'ites in Safavid Iran is illustrated by the number of Iranians who went to work for the sultans of Golconda. These included the calligrapher 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni, the scribe of cat. 47 above, and Jalal al-Din Muhammad ibn Jamal al-Din Husayn al-Fakhkhar, whose father produced another fine Qur'an that is now in the Khalili Collection, cat. 45 above.

The province of Sind in western India, which had been Muslim since the 8th century AD, was ruled from 1556 by the Tarkhanid dynasty.<sup>2</sup> Akbar conquered the northern half of the province in 1573, and in 1591 he defeated Janibeg, the last Tarkhanid sultan, and incorporated the rest of Sind into the Mughal empire. Janibeg's short reign is commemorated by the elaborate seal that he had placed on the first folio of a Qur'an now in the Khalili Collection, cat. 52 below. The opening pages of the manuscript, which are in poor condition, resemble Herati work of the first half of the 16th century, but the remainder, which is in a much better state, is unlike Iranian work of this period in the illumination of its surah headings and the unusual proportions of its script, and it may well have been produced in Sind.

An Indian provenance is also even more likely in the case of another Qur'an in the Khalili Collection, cat. 53 below, for it has the long, narrow, two-volume format typical of many pre-Mughal Indian Qur'ans. This manuscript is dated 1517, and, if it is indeed Indian, it has a claim to be the earliest 16th-century Indian Qur'an known.

1. British Library, Add. MS. 18,497; see Brand & Lowry 1986, cat. no. 21. This manuscript was copied by Hibatallah

al-Husayni in 1573-4. The inscription mentioning the 'Sultan of Lahore' is a later addition. This city was Akbar's

capital between 1584 and 1598, during his campaigns in the North-west.

2. Davis 1960.

52

## Single-volume Qur'an

Perhaps Sind or northern India, *circa* 1500–1525

402 folios, 27 × 20 cm, with  
10 lines to the page

*Material* The text is on a buff paper,  
which is probably wove; the  
margins are made of a pale blue  
paper, laid, with 6 lines to the  
centimetre

*Text area* 19.5 × 12 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 2 cm

*Script* The main text in a script with  
features of *muḥaqqaq* and *naskh*,  
incidentals in *thulth*

*Binding* Ottoman, 15th century

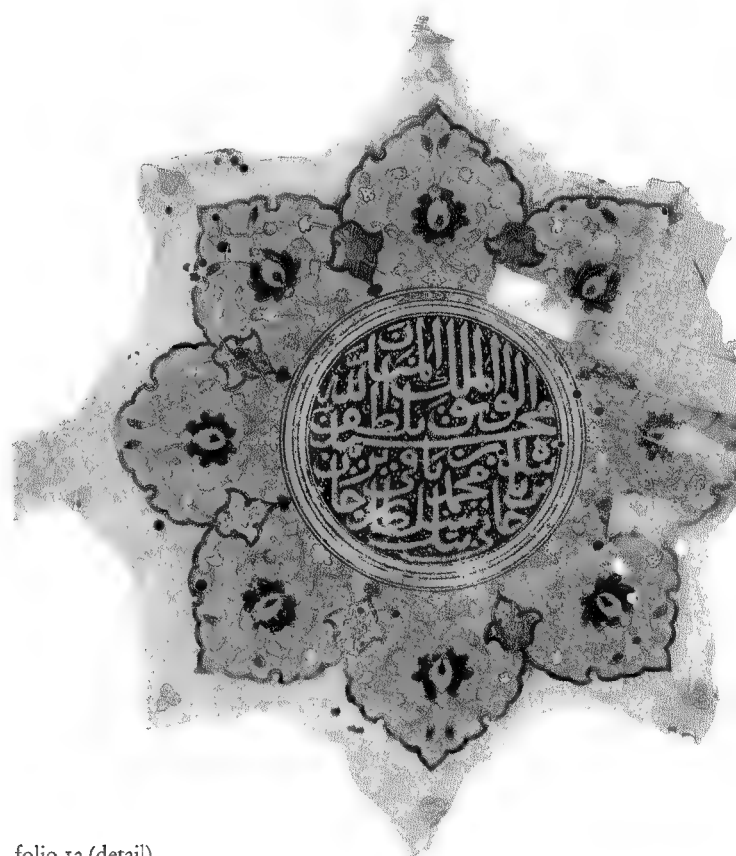
*Accession no.* QUR59

*Comparative item* Cat. 30

1. See Zambaur 1927, p. 291,  
table 265.

2. I am most grateful to Robert  
Skelton for his help in deciphering  
the name on the seal.

There are no positive clues to the provenance of this rare and unusual manuscript in its illumination, but at the end of the 16th century it was in the possession of Janibeg ibn Muhammad Payandah, the last Tarkhanid ruler of Sind (*reg* 1585–91).<sup>1</sup> His ownership was recorded on the first folio by an imposing seal impression decorated with gold and placed within a rosette.<sup>2</sup> This evidence suggests that the manuscript's origins lay in northern India, but it is unlikely that Janibeg commissioned the manuscript, as the decoration lacks elements such as the cloud scroll that are generally found in late 16th-century Indian Qur'ans. The same elements are also absent from

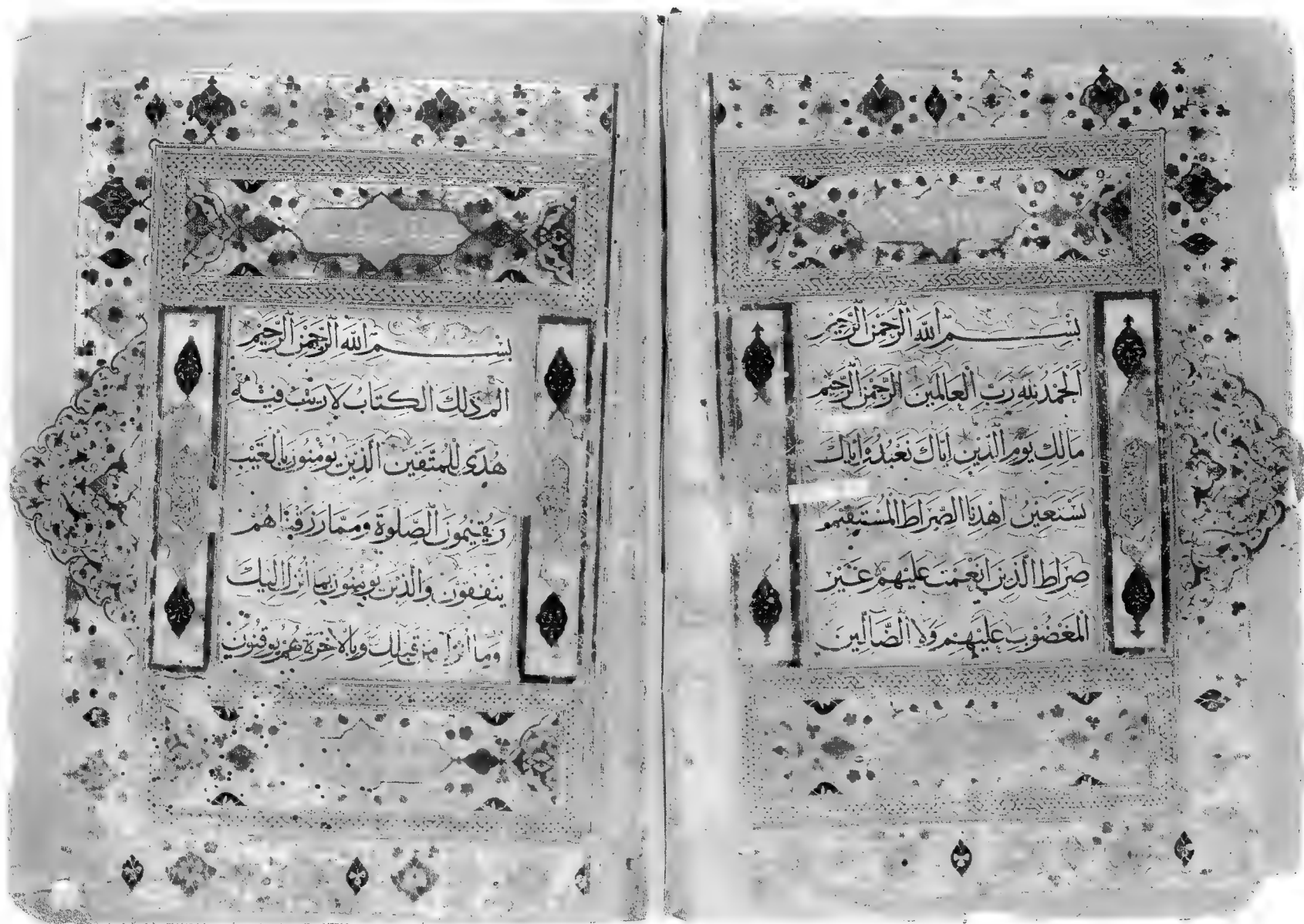


52 folio 1a (detail)

cat. 53, which is dated 1517 and may also be of Indian origin. On this basis, we may attribute cat. 52 to the first quarter of the 16th century.

The hand of cat. 52 is a large, hybrid script in which elements of *muḥaqqaq* and *naskh* are combined. It is clearly the work of an accomplished master but has a number of features not found in Iranian and Ottoman Qur'ans of the 16th century: the text is arranged in an extremely rare ten-line format; the script is unusually large for the size of the text area, but the *alif* is unusually short (0.8 cm) for the size of the script; and the distance between the lines (2 cm) is rather wide for the size of the script. In 16th-century Qur'ans from Iran, for example, the *alif* is usually 0.8 cm in height, but the distance between the lines is generally between 1.2 and 1.5 cm.





Surah titles are in elegant gold or blue *thulth* and are written in cloud cartouches. The background is hatched in red and gold with fine blue arabesque scrolls in blue silhouette. These are freely drawn and almost never become regular patterns. The backgrounds sometimes include gold arabesque scrolls enlivened with red, together with repeating treble-dot motifs. The opening folios are, by contrast, rather dull. They are competently but unimaginatively decorated after the fashion of late 15th-century Herati manuscripts. Almost all the original colour has disappeared, and the silver used in some quantity has now oxidized.

The verses are separated by gold discs with blue dots, and each group of ten verses was originally marked in the margin by the word '*ashar*' ('ten') in gold. This is the means usually employed in Ottoman Qur'ans to mark groups of ten verses, whereas in Indian Qur'ans it became the standard practice to use the letter '*ayn*' (for '*ashar*') for this purpose. The manuscript has been remargined with a blue paper, although some of the original paper of the margins survives because it bears marginalia, mostly prayers. The black morocco covers have central medallions containing an eight-pointed star in gold and blind tooling. The main field is surrounded by borders and corner-pieces also decorated in gold and blind tooling.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا  
آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ أَلَا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ  
وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنُوا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ طِيبِهِمْ  
قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا مِنْهُمْ وَنَآلُوا اللَّهَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ  
بِهِمْ وَبِئْسَ مَا لَهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ أُولَٰئِكَ  
الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ  
وَمَا كَانَ أُولَٰئِكَ مِنْكُمْ مِثْلُ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ  
نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ  
فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ صُمُّ رُكْمٍ عُتِيٌّ فَمَا هُمْ إِلَّا  
يَرْجِعُونَ أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ

مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْآنَ هَذَا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ أَنْ يَطْشُرَ بِكَ  
لَشَدِيدٍ أَنَّهُ هُوَ يَبْدِي وَيَعِيدُ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الْودُودُ ذُو  
الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدِ فَعَالَ لِمَا يَرِيدُ هَلْ تَيْكَ حَدِيثُ الْجَنُودِ فَرَعُو  
وَتَمُودِ بِلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي تَكْذِيبِ وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَاءِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ

بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَجِيدٌ سُورَةُ الطَّارِقِ سَبْعٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ النُّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ  
أَنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَهَا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ  
مِنْ مَاءٍ دَافِقٍ يُخْرَجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ  
لَقَادِرٌ يَوْمَ تَبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ وَالسَّمَاءُ ذَاتُ

## The second volume of a two-volume Qur'an

Perhaps northern India, AH923/AD 1517

427 folios, 34.8 × 21 cm, with  
9 lines to the page

*Material* A buff paper, laid, with  
6–7 lines to the centimetre;  
chain lines are occasionally visible  
2.5 cm apart

*Text area* 22.5 × 11.5 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 2 cm

*Script* The main text in a  
combination of muḥaqqaq, thulth  
and naskh, incidentals in riqā'

*Scribe* Muhammad ibn

'Abd al-Rahman

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Iran, 18th century

*Accession no.* QUR153

*Published* Sothebys 1984b,  
lot no. 251

*Comparative items* A Qur'an page  
in a private collection, Geneva;<sup>1</sup> and  
a Qur'an in biḥārī script found at  
Dawran, Yemen.<sup>2</sup>

1. Geneva 1988, cat.no. 52.

2. Wittkam 1989, fig. 8.

3. The first volume of this Qur'an  
was offered for sale to the Khalili  
Collection in 1991 but was not  
acquired.

4. Moritz 1905, pl. 97.

Even though the same type of layout as that used in this manuscript was employed in 16th-century Qur'ans from Iran, the long, narrow format of the manuscript is rather un-Iranian in appearance. When the manuscript was sold at Sotheby's in 1984, a northern Indian provenance was suggested. Signed and dated copies of the Qur'an produced in India at this time are rare, but a number of features make the suggestion plausible. The narrow format of the pages is reminiscent of some Qur'ans in *biḥārī* script, and the long, bold, sharply pointed ends of sublinear letters such as *wāw* and final *yā'* are seen in other Qur'ans known to be Indian in origin. It should also be noted that virtually no Qur'ans in two volumes are known to have been made in Iran or Turkey in any era.<sup>3</sup> If the manuscript is from India rather than Iran, then it is of considerable importance, as almost no Indian Qur'ans are known from the first half of the 16th century. A copy in the National Library in Cairo reproduced by Moritz is supposedly dated 1512 but looks much later.<sup>4</sup>

The first and ninth line of each page are copied out in blue *muḥaqqaq*, the fifth line is in gold *thulth*, and the remainder of the text – two blocks of three lines – is in *naskh*. The five blocks of script are enclosed in separate panels surrounded by double gold rules. Surah titles are written in finely decorated panels, often with the title in a cartouche surrounded by gold palmettes and floral sprays. The opening and closing pages of text are decorated in much the same manner as the surah headings. This illumination is noteworthy both for the high quality of the workmanship and for the use of two types of gold. Its most unusual feature, however, is the complete absence of cloud scrolls which are such a constant part of Iranian, particularly Shirazi, illumination in this period.

Verses are punctuated by gold rosettes with red and blue dots, while each fifth and tenth verse is indicated by a device in the margin. The markers for each tenth verse are quatrefoils bearing a double palmette, and those for each fifth verse are shield shapes bearing a single palmette. The other main divisions of the text are indicated by gold inscriptions. There are reading notes in red, and alternative readings are given in the margin.

The black shagreen covers have stamped central medallions and corner-pieces of gilt leather overlay with painted floral designs, animals and birds. The doublures are of red morocco and bear decoration identical to that of the covers but with the details in gold on black.



لِلْهُدَىٰ وَآزَلْنَا لِلْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَىٰ

فَأَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّى لَا يَصْلَاهَا  
إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى  
وَيَسْجُجُهَا الْأَنْفَى الَّذِي تَوَلَّى مَا لَهُ مَرْجَى

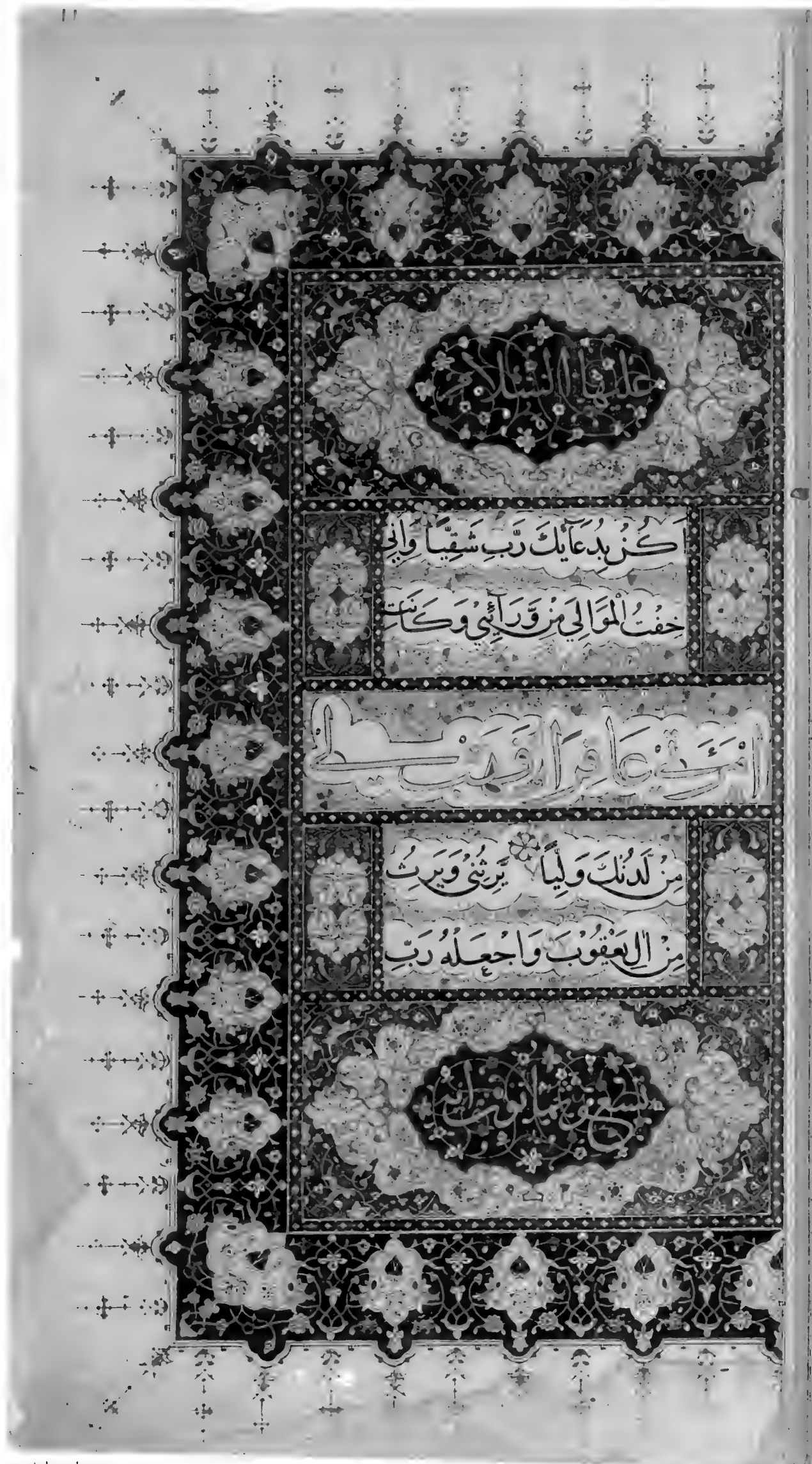
وَالْأَجَلَ عَسَلًا رَافِعًا

الْأَيْنِغَا وَجْهَ رَبِّ الْأَعْلَى وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ





نقید و لایحه ای که در خصوص شصت و دو کلاس که به هزار و شصت صد و دو و هشتاد و شش رکوع و بتول بعضی مفت حکم آنکه کان یا الفظا رکوع  
میان آن و در بعضی کتب با آنجا خلافت ۵۵



و قتل از ۳۰ و ۲۰  
سور که در صفحه  
و اذکر في الكتاب  
مربيع  
دوم الي جهنم  
در ۱۰  
سیدم عند الرحمن  
عبدال

بالعرة المستقيمة الربيع  
و بغير العرة حرق

۵۵

# The Age of Ahmed Karahisarî

During the 16th century the Ottoman empire reached the height of its power and enjoyed a period of unprecedented economic growth encouraged by relative political stability. The resources these circumstances afforded were reflected in the solid monumental architecture and sumptuous decorative arts commissioned by the sultan and his court, who were also able to acquire manuscripts of a quality that has never been surpassed. The development of book illustration and illumination during this period was profoundly affected by the traditions established in Iran in the previous half-century. These were transmitted to Istanbul by a movement of manuscripts and artists that is traditionally associated with the capture of Tabriz by the Ottoman army in 1514. In calligraphy the Ottomans were far less dependent on inspiration from the older centres of Islamic culture, and Ahmed Karahisarî, the leading Ottoman calligrapher of the 16th century, was able to complement his mastery of the more usual forms of the art with his consummate skill as a designer of monumental inscriptions and other decorative compositions.

Karahisarî's work is known from albums and manuscripts which are mostly preserved in Istanbul libraries and from architectural inscriptions which survive in the mosques of the same city. Evidence of this sort relates only to the period between 1527 and his death in 1556; for an outline of the rest of his career, we must rely on the brief accounts of his life in literary sources. Despite its fanciful language and a few inaccuracies, the most reliable of these is the *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn*, the biographical compilation of the 18th-century Ottoman scholar Müstakimzâde: 'He was a native of Karahisar. He took Yahya al-Sufi as his model in *thulth* and *naskh* calligraphy and then made a fair copy of the draft of advantage by studying the finer points of the subject with that sunburst in the heavens of refinement, the late Asadallah al-Kirmani. His expertise in the type of monumental calligraphy known as *kalem-i müsenîâ* ('mirror writing') is even more striking than his other accomplishments. This author of fine works left all these as his memorial: his inscription in the main dome of the Noble Mosque of the Süleymaniye, his composition containing the Noble Verse '*Salâmun 'alaykum, tibtum*' in the mosque of Piyale Paşa,<sup>1</sup> the chronograms on the *sebil* and tomb of the late Mimar Sinan,<sup>2</sup> and the calligraphy on his own tombstone, apart from the Arabic numerals;<sup>3</sup> his tomb lies near the grave of Cemal Halife, the appointed successor of the Şeyh İshak Halvetî,<sup>4</sup> who was buried in front of the Caferâbâd *tekke* in Söğüt. According to his tomb, it was in the year 963 (AD 1556), when he was nearly 90 years old, that, as he descended from the fast fortress of existence into the trench of the black earth, the bright sun of his being went down, and the star of his life set in the house of eternity. Other details of his character are contained in the works of my predecessors.'<sup>5</sup>

The information concerning Karahisarî's death – in 1556 at the age of almost 90 – allows us to place his birth about 1468. As his name indicates, he came from a town called Karahisar, and this is usually taken to mean Afyonkarahisar,<sup>6</sup> although there are a dozen other Karahisars in Anatolia. If his first teacher, named as Yahya al-Sufi, was the Ottoman calligrapher Yahya al-Sufi of Edirne, who died in 1477, this would mean that Karahisarî was taught by Yahya as a boy under ten years old. This was certainly possible, and his instruction would presumably have taken place in Istanbul, where Yahya worked on the inscriptions of the Fatih Mosque. Nevertheless, it is clear that his second teacher, Asadallah Kirmani, had the greater influence on the aspiring calligrapher, for Karahisarî almost invariably coupled his own name with that of Asadallah in the Arabic signature he used on the work of his maturity: 'The weakest of the weak and the dust of the footsteps of the poor and the indigent, Ahmad al-Qarah-hisari, one



of the pupils of Sayyid Asadallah al-Kirmani . . .<sup>7</sup> It is rare to find an Ottoman calligrapher before Karahisarî referring to himself as the pupil (*tilmidh*) of a particular master, and Karahisarî presumably began the practice because of the reverence in which he held his teacher.

Asadallah Kirmani is known to history almost solely as the master of Ahmed Karahisarî. According to Müstakimzâde,<sup>8</sup> Asadallah came from Kirmanshah, and not Kirman, as his *nisbah* would lead one to expect. Kirmanshah is one of the most westerly towns in Iran, and in the second half of the 15th century it was under the control of the Aqqoyunlu Turkomans, who had their capital at Tabriz. In some sources, Asadallah is said to have studied *ta'liq*, by which the Ottomans meant *nasta'liq*, with Muhammad Kirmani;<sup>9</sup> in others, he is said to have been a student of 'Abd al-Rahim Khwarazmi, who is referred to by his pen-name of Anisi.<sup>10</sup> 'Abd al-Rahim Khwarazmi, who flourished between about 1460 and 1494, was one of the most eminent calligraphers of his time and an intimate of the Aqqoyunlu ruler Sultan Ya'qub (reg 1478–90), and he is known to have worked in Shiraz, Baghdad and Tabriz.<sup>11</sup> It is not certain whether any authentic examples of Asadallah's hand have survived, as only one manuscript bearing his name is known; dated AH 878/AD 1473–4, it is now in the Topkapı Palace Library in Istanbul.<sup>12</sup> According to Müstakimzâde, the library of Ayasofya contained a large Qur'an written by this calligrapher in AH 862/AD 1457–8, but its present whereabouts are unknown. A large, undated Qur'an which bore the name of Asadallah Kirmani written in gold was sold at auction in London in 1990.<sup>13</sup> The manuscript had been in Turkey towards the end of the 16th century, as it contained an endowment notice in the name of the daughter of Rüstem Paşa (d 1561), which was pasted over but still readable. The style in which the manuscript was decorated, however, was unquestionably that of Herat in the mid-16th century, more than 50 years after Asadallah's death. This is said to have occurred in 1486, when Karahisarî would have been about 18 years old. As there is no indication that Asadallah was ever in Istanbul, it may be that the youthful Karahisarî went to Iran to study with Asadallah towards the end of the master's life. It must be admitted, however, that there are no records of Ottoman artists having visited western Iran in the final years of the 15th century, although Iranian and Mamluk artists are known to have gone to Istanbul in the same period.

Müstakimzâde tells us that Karahisarî worked on several public buildings, and his inscriptions in the Süleymaniye and the mosque of Piyale Paşa can still be seen. At the Süleymaniye, and presumably on other commissions, he was assisted by Hasan Çelebi, a Circassian slave whom he first liberated and then adopted as his son; as a result, Hasan Çelebi also called himself Hasan ibn Ahmed and Hasan ibn Karahisarî. According to some sources, Karahisarî designed the inscription on the mihrab of the Süleymaniye; according to others, he was responsible for the inscriptions on the volutes of the dome. Hasan Çelebi is said to have been responsible for most of the remainder.<sup>14</sup> Both men also received commissions for manuscripts from the imperial court. One of Karahisarî's best-known works, a Qur'an dated AH 954/AD 1547, was illuminated by Kara Memi, the leading court illuminator of the time,<sup>15</sup> and the manuscript that can be counted as the calligrapher's masterpiece, at least insofar as his Qur'ans are concerned, was a copy evidently begun for Süleyman the Magnificent. This manuscript remained unfinished at the calligrapher's death and was completed by another master, almost certainly Hasan Çelebi, whose hand was very similar to that of his adoptive father.<sup>16</sup>

We have works in Karahisarî's hand dating from 1527 down to 1554, almost all of which are in Turkey. All of these appear to have been royal commissions,<sup>17</sup> but a prayer-book bearing his name and dated AH 947/AD 1540–41 was sold in London in 1988.<sup>18</sup> This may have been done

for a patron outside the court, for it is rather hurriedly executed in parts, but there is very little doubt it is his work, as it is comparable in style and decoration to two other manuscripts by the same calligrapher, both of which are copies of *Sūrat al-an‘ām*. One is dated AH947/AD 1540, and the other AH954/AD 1547.<sup>19</sup> The attribution to Karahisarî of a manuscript in the Khalili Collection, cat. 56 below, is more problematic. The quality of both the script and the illumination is of the highest order, but the manuscript is unsigned, and the text is presented in a very traditional and conservative manner. A comparison of the script with examples of *naskh* known to be by Karahisarî suggests that such an attribution is possible, although it should be noted that there are inconsistencies between these examples. In the Qur‘an of 1546–7, for example, he wrote the combination of *alif* and *lām* that forms the Arabic definite article with a *tarwīṣah* (a short supplementary stroke) at the top of the *lām*, while in an album of calligraphy dated 1552–3, also in the Topkapı Palace Library, he omitted the *tarwīṣah* and used more elongated letter forms. The script of cat. 56 is closer to that of the album, but it is not identical with it. The illumination is in the Timurid-Turkoman tradition of the Ottoman court, with no trace of Safavid-inspired cloud scrolls or of the more realistic style of Kara Memi. In short, it is difficult to be specific about when the manuscript was produced or to attribute it to a particular scribe, but, because of its excellent quality and the general period in which it was made, *circa* 1520–50, there must be a strong possibility that it is the work of Ahmed Karahisarî.

The extraordinary talent of Karahisarî manifests itself most clearly in the prayer-books and the selections of surahs used as prayer-books that he copied for the Ottoman court. A phrase that occurs in these works with great frequency is the invocation *Bi‘smi‘llāhi‘l-rahīm* (‘In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful’), known as the *basmalah*. Although Muslim calligraphers are required to write the *basmalah* on innumerable occasions, creating an elegant composition from its component elements has always been a test of skill because of the inherent imbalance between the word forms. Karahisarî successfully resolved this problem through the use of *musalsal* (‘chain’) script, executed without removing the pen from the paper, and his *basmalahs* and other compositions in this medium have never been matched. Indeed, work of this type seems to have gone out of fashion until the late 18th century, when another great calligrapher, Mustafa Rakım Efendi, began to develop calligraphic designs along the same lines. From this time onwards interest in the work of Karahisarî was stimulated by lithographic reproductions, and, as a result, two of his *basmalahs* have become the best-known pieces of Islamic calligraphy from any era.<sup>20</sup>

Although Karahisarî appears to have been the first Ottoman calligrapher to devise compositions of this type, his contribution was in fact a continuation and refinement of the work of scribes who had practised in other parts of the Islamic world, notably Aqqoyunlu Tabriz and Mamluk Cairo, in the late 15th century and the early 16th.<sup>21</sup> Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Tibi, for example, worked for the Mamluk sultan Qansawh al-Ghawri (reg 1501–16) and produced examples of *musalsal* calligraphy as well as compositions in more exotic scripts.<sup>22</sup> Much of the work of these Tabrizi and Cairene masters was assembled in albums that were brought to Istanbul as loot after the conquest of these cities in 1514 and 1517 respectively.<sup>23</sup> However, if Karahisarî spent some time in western Iran during the Aqqoyunlu period, between, say, 1480 and 1490, he may well have gained experience of these compositions from the calligraphers who had created them rather than having to rely on the examples brought to Istanbul in the so-called Fatih Albums.

From Müstakimzâde's account, it seems probable that Karahisarî was a member of the Halvetî (Khalwati) order of Sufis. There are a great many examples of calligraphers who were also Sufis, and a number of other Ottoman calligraphers – including the great Şeyh Hamdullah himself – were connected with this order, which originated in Tabriz in the late 14th century. By the reign of Sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512) the Halvetî order had spread throughout Anatolia and into Istanbul. Although it suffered for suspected Shi'ite sympathies under Sultan Selim I, it flourished again during the reign of Sultan Süleyman (1520–66). It would be interesting to know if Karahisarî's teachers, Yahya al-Sufi and Asadallah Kirmani, were members of the same order. It was certainly active in western Iran in the lifetime of Asadallah, and 'Umar Rushani (d 1486), one of its leading members in the Aqqoyunlu period, was a protégé of Uzun Hasan (reg 1453–78), the greatest Aqqoyunlu sultan. It is not clear when Karahisarî joined the order, but this presumably took place relatively early in his career, and it may be that the erroneous reference in Müstakimzâde to the chronograms on the *sebil* and tomb of Mimar Sinan can be explained in the light of Karahisarî's Halvetî connections. The author may have confused Mimar Sinan with Sinan al-Din Yusuf Sünbül, the founder of the Sünbülî branch of the Halvetî order, who died in Istanbul in 1529.<sup>24</sup>

1. 'Peace be upon you! Well have ye done!' This is part of *Sûrat al-zumar* (xxxix), verse 73, and is said by the angels to those who enter Paradise.  
2. As Mimar Sinan died in 1588, this cannot be correct.  
3. This tombstone has been lost. The 'Arabic numerals' referred to gave the date of Karahisarî's death. He presumably left a blank space for them.  
4. The published text at this point reads: '*inâbetkerdesi olduğu Cemal Halife ki Şeyh İshak Halvetî'dir onun merkadı civarında*'. Its meaning is not entirely clear.  
5. Müstakimzâde, p. 94, where the entry concludes with two chronograms relating to Karahisarî's death. The translation was kindly provided by Tim Stanley.

6. Rado 1984, p. 69, for example.  
7. See Rado 1984, p. 72, for example.  
8. *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn*, p. 113.  
9. Huart 1908, p. 99. Bayani (1345–58, III, nos 1216–7) recorded two calligraphers called Muhammad Kirmani. The first was a pupil of 'Abd al-Karim (as opposed to 'Abd al-Rahim?) Khwarazmi, and the second was active in Tabriz and Herat.  
10. Bayani 1345–58, II, no. 533.  
11. Bayani 1345–58, II, *loc. cit.*  
12. MS. Y 2593; see Karatay 1962, cat. no. 369.  
13. Christie's 1990, lot no. 59.  
14. Huart 1908, p. 127.  
15. MS. Y 999; see Atıl 1987, cat. no. 9a, and Rogers & Ward 1989, cat. no. 15a.

16. Atıl 1987, p. 52.  
17. Ünver 1948, pp. 11–12.  
18. Sotheby's 1988, lot no. 151.  
19. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, MS. EH 2112 (Ünver 1948, p. 18); and Museum of Turkish & Islamic Arts, MS. 1438 (Aksoy 1977, pp. 126–7).  
20. Ünver 1948, pp. 16–17.  
21. Rogers & Ward, cat. no. 16.  
22. Al-Tibi, p. 58. Compare the two *basmalahs* in *musalsal* with Karahisarî's best-known examples (Ünver 1948, pp. 16–17).  
23. A small number of examples are reproduced in Çağman 1981 (figs 3, 5–8). For details of some of the calligraphers whose work is found in the albums, see Çağman 1981, pp. 32–3.  
24. De Jong 1978.

54

## Single-volume Qur'an

Ottoman, AH938/AD1531-2

398 folios, 17.2 × 11.4 cm, with

13 lines to the page

*Material* A polished cream paper, laid, with 6 lines to the centimetre

*Text area* 10.8 × 5.8 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 0.8 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh, incidentals in thulth

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* 16th or 17th century

*Accession no.* QUR82

*Comparative item* Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 1116.<sup>1</sup>

1. Frankfurt 1985, II, cat.no. 1/75.

2. Compare Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 1116.

The opening pages of this manuscript are decorated in a manner typical of the period. The panels above and below the text contained the titles and verse counts in gold on gold, now barely visible, and are filled with fine arabesques and palmettes. The same decoration covers the triangular hasps on the outer sides.<sup>2</sup> The narrower vertical panels that flank the text contain chains of arabesque in black on gold.

Surah headings are in *thulth*, verses are separated by gold discs, and the margins are ruled in gold. The colophon on folio 398a seems to have been written with a brush. It is in the form of a roundel which has been cut out and stuck down on to the underlying paper, presumably because the rest of the page from which it was cut was damaged and has been discarded.

The red morocco covers have stamped central medallions and corner-pieces of gilt leather overlay decorated with floral motifs.

55

## Single-volume Qur'an

Ottoman, AD912/AH1506-7

343 folios, 15 × 10.8 cm, with

15 lines to the page

*Material* A polished cream paper, laid, but with little visible detail

*Text area* 10.5 × 6 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 0.7 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh, incidentals in *riqā'*

*Scribe* Mustafa ibn Nasuh es-Selânîkî

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* Ottoman, 18th century

*Accession no.* QUR 429

*Comparative item* Manchester, John Rylands Library, Arabic MS. 43.<sup>1</sup>

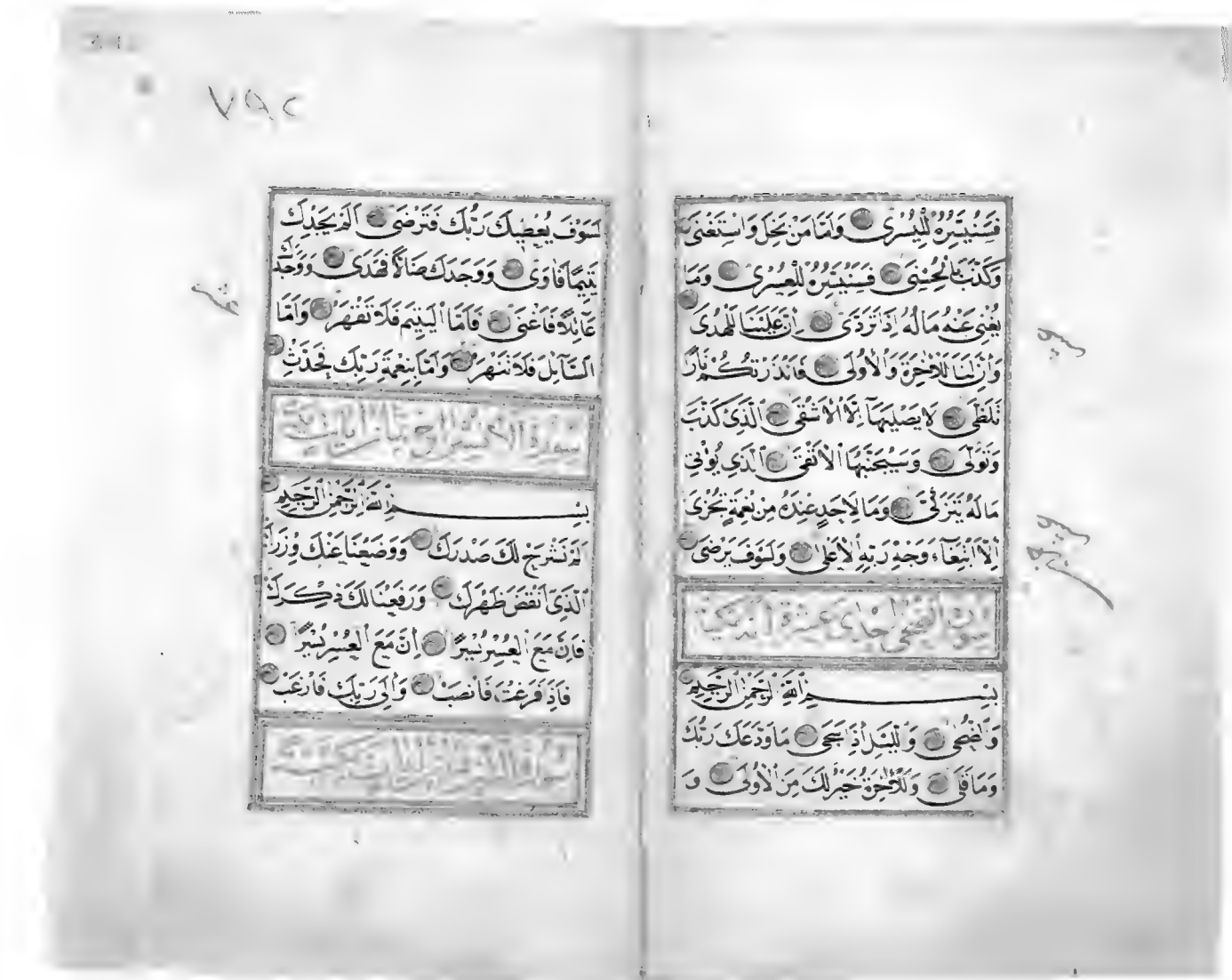
1. Lings 1976, cat.no. 92.

2. Müstakimzâde, p. 454; Rado 1984, p. 48.

The calligrapher of this manuscript, Mustafa ibn Nasuh, was born in Salonica and later came to Istanbul, where he is said to have been a pupil of Şeyh Hamdullah.<sup>2</sup> His work is also known from a beautifully illuminated Qur'an in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, which is dated 1505. Although the illumination of the opening pages of the Khalili Qur'an is not of the same high quality, and the two manuscripts were clearly not decorated by the same artist, both are in a rather Persianizing style.

The surah headings are written in gold *riqā'* with blue vocalization and are mostly undecorated. The verses are separated by gold circlets, and all other textual divisions are marked by gold inscriptions in the margins. All the pages have gold rules. The brown morocco covers have central medallions with pendants.







بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ مَا وَدَّكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا  
 قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ خَشَوْكَ مِنْ لَدُونِكَ وَأَلْهَمَ الْوَفْقَ لِحُدُودِ  
 رَبِّكَ قَرَّبَ شَيْءًا أَنْ يَخْبِتَ لَكَ سِيمًا كَأَنَّهُ يَكْشِفُ  
 مَا لَا قَهْدَ فِيهِ وَيُخَذِّلُ عَائِدًا كَأَنَّهُ قَاتِلُ الْبَشِيرِ  
 فَلَا تَعْمُرُ أَكْوَافَ السَّائِلِ فَلَا تَهْمُ وَمَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّكَ فَتَعْمُرُ

**سورة النازعات**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 أَمْ تَنْتَهِجُ لَكَ حَيْدُكَ وَأَوْصِيْعًا عَمَكَ وَدَرْكَ  
 الَّذِي لَقِصَّ ظَهْرَكَ لَمَوْزٍ هَيْهَاتَكَ دَيْكُكَ  
 كَأَنَّمَعَ الْغَيْرُ يُشْرِدُ إِنْ مَعَ الْغَيْرِ يُشْرِدُ كَأَنَّمَعَ  
 قَالَتْ قَوْلِي رَبِّكَ كَأَنَّمَعَ

**سورة النازعات**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ مَا وَدَّكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا  
 قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ خَشَوْكَ مِنْ لَدُونِكَ وَأَلْهَمَ الْوَفْقَ لِحُدُودِ  
 رَبِّكَ قَرَّبَ شَيْءًا أَنْ يَخْبِتَ لَكَ سِيمًا كَأَنَّهُ يَكْشِفُ  
 مَا لَا قَهْدَ فِيهِ وَيُخَذِّلُ عَائِدًا كَأَنَّهُ قَاتِلُ الْبَشِيرِ  
 فَلَا تَعْمُرُ أَكْوَافَ السَّائِلِ فَلَا تَهْمُ وَمَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّكَ فَتَعْمُرُ

**سورة النازعات**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 أَمْ تَنْتَهِجُ لَكَ حَيْدُكَ وَأَوْصِيْعًا عَمَكَ وَدَرْكَ  
 الَّذِي لَقِصَّ ظَهْرَكَ لَمَوْزٍ هَيْهَاتَكَ دَيْكُكَ  
 كَأَنَّمَعَ الْغَيْرُ يُشْرِدُ إِنْ مَعَ الْغَيْرِ يُشْرِدُ كَأَنَّمَعَ  
 قَالَتْ قَوْلِي رَبِّكَ كَأَنَّمَعَ

**سورة النازعات**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ مِنْ سِرِّ مَا خَلَقَ وَمِنْ سِرِّ  
 غَايَةِ إِذَا وَقَبَ وَمِنْ سِرِّ الْقَضَائَاتِ فِي الْعَقَدِ  
 وَمِنْ سِرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ بِمَلَكِ النَّاسِ إِلَهِ  
 النَّاسِ مِنْ سِرِّ لَوْ سَوَّيْتُ خُفَايَ الَّذِي  
 يُؤَسِّسُ فِي حَيْدُورِ النَّاسِ مِنْ الْحَمْدِ  
 وَالنَّاسِ



56

## Single-volume Qur'an

Istanbul, circa 1550–1560

374 folios, 19.7 × 13.2 cm, with 12 lines to the page

*Material* A combination of well-polished buff papers, both laid and wove, the laid paper with 9–10 lines to the centimetre. The end-papers are modern, with a watermark that reads 'Trong'

*Text area* 12.3 × 6.8 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 1 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh, incidentals in thulth

*Binding* Modern facsimile

*Accession no.* QUR420

*Published* Sotheby's 1989, lot no. 223

*Comparative item* Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, MS.EH58.<sup>1</sup>

1. Atıl 1987, cat.no. 8.

2. Sotheby's 1989, lot no. 223.

3. The binder was probably Necmeddin Okyay (1883–1976); see Rado 1984, p. 265.

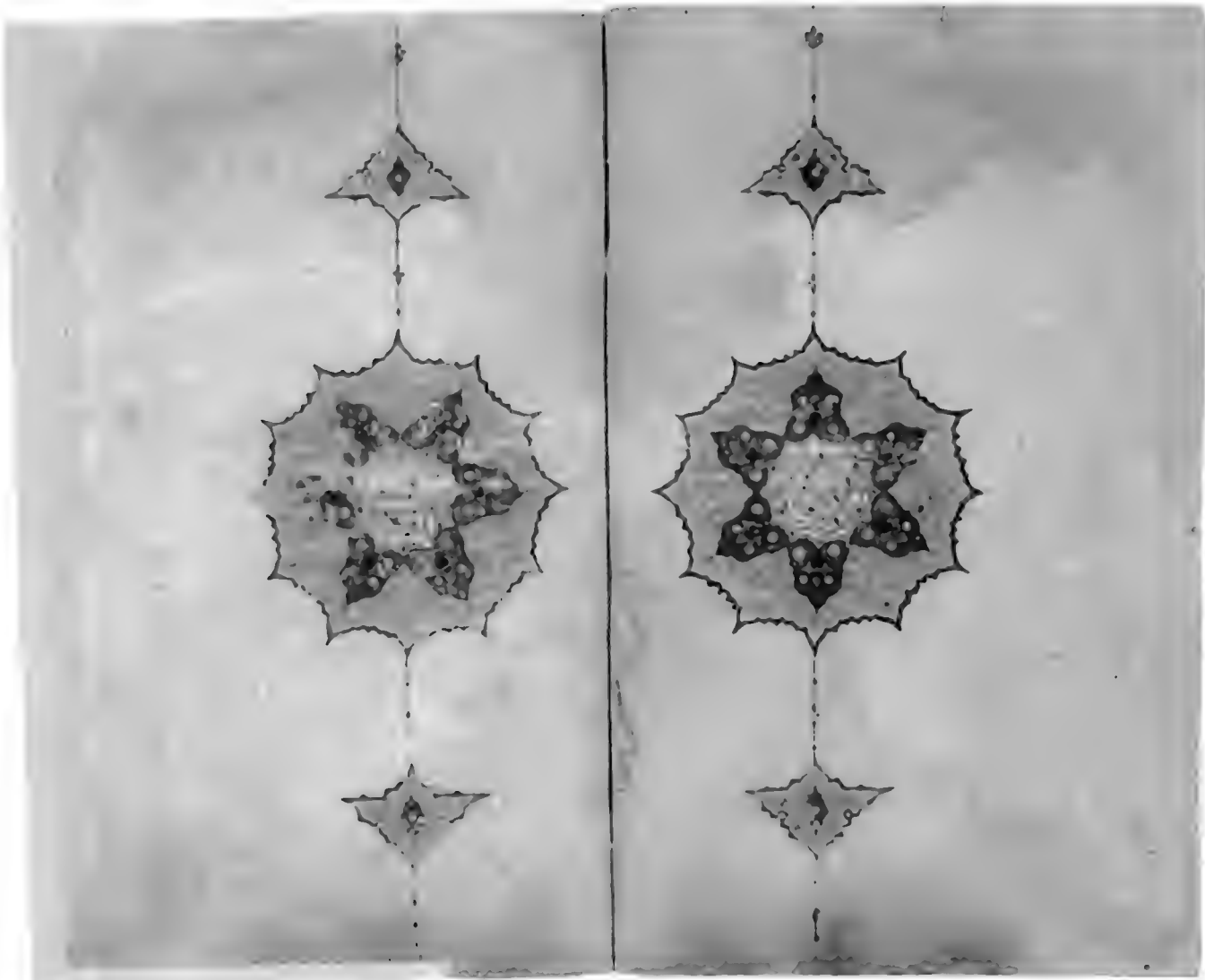
This manuscript must have been prepared in the Ottoman imperial *nakkashâne* around 1550–60, for the finesse and restraint of its decoration is typical of Ottoman court manuscripts produced during the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566). Although the manuscript is unsigned, it can only have been the work of a scribe of considerable standing, and Ahmed Karahisarî has been proposed as the calligrapher responsible for it,<sup>2</sup> but the great master appears always to have signed his work.

The manuscript begins and ends with two pairs of large rosettes set on facing pages. The rosettes have pendants and are delicately painted with fine arabesque scrolls. They bear the Qur'anic verses customary at these points: verses 77–80 of *Sūrat al-wāqī'ah* (LVI) at the beginning of the manuscript and verse 115 of *Sūrat al-an'ām* at the end. The opening folios of text are decorated in the same manner, but using two different types of gold.

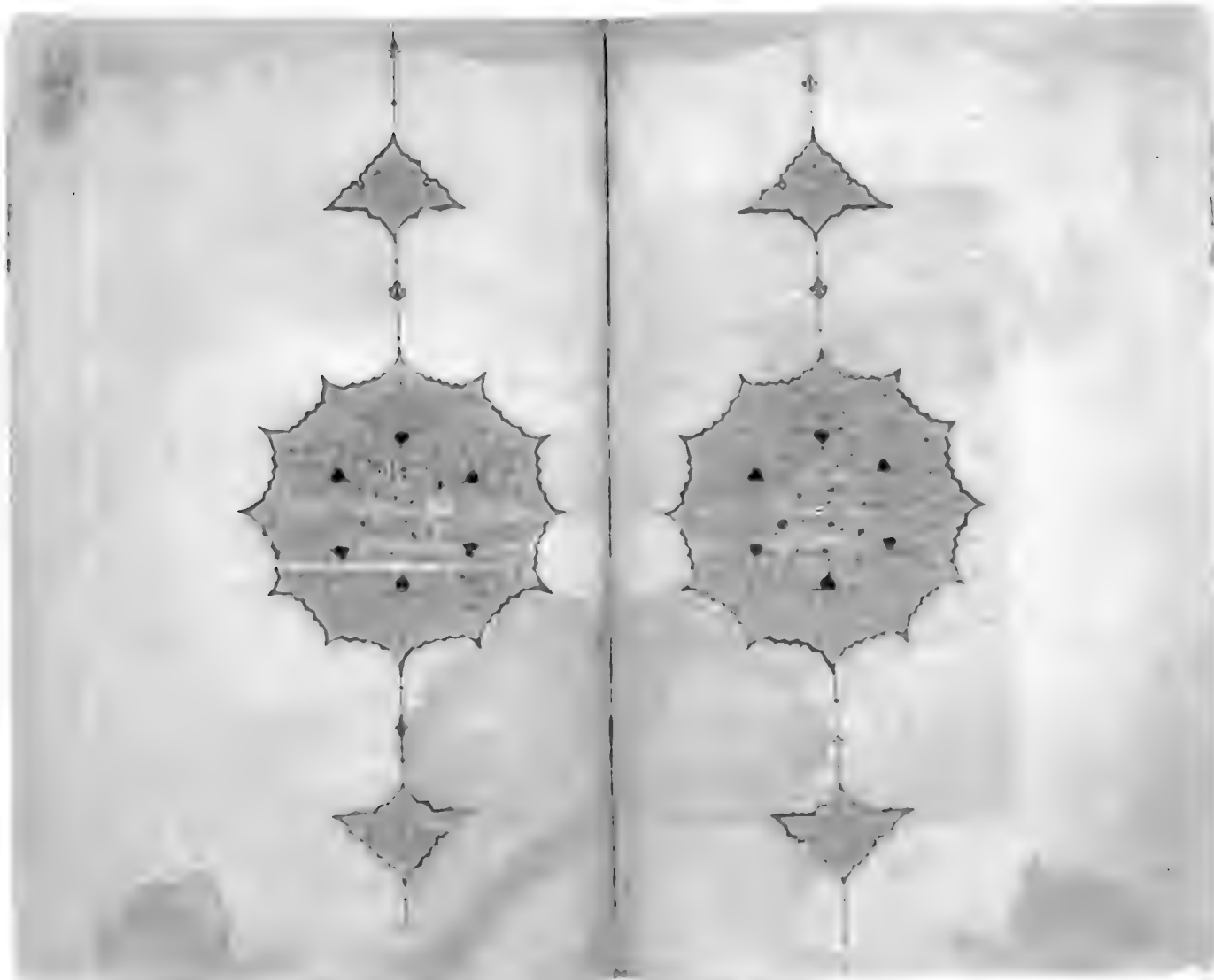
The text on pages that contain the beginning of a surah is enclosed in gold cartouches, and, where the surah heading comes at the top of a page, the illumination has been extended into the upper margin. Verses are separated by small gold rosettes, and groups of ten verses are marked in the margins by medallions with long blue finials. Each *hizb* is marked by a four-pointed medallion, and each *juz'* by a medallion painted so that it seems to disappear under the text.

The covers are modern but were made in the style of an Ottoman binding of the 16th century. They were signed by the binder, Necmeddin, and dated AH 1370/AD 1950.<sup>3</sup> The central panels are decorated with arabesques and cloud-scrolls, all of which are brushed with gilt. In the outer borders there are cartouches and quatrefoils with floral decoration in a 16th-century style. The doublures have central oval medallions and corner-pieces which were stamped over red morocco and brushed with gilt. The edge of the flap bears the text of verses 78–80 of *Sūrat al-wāqī'ah* in excellent *thulth*.

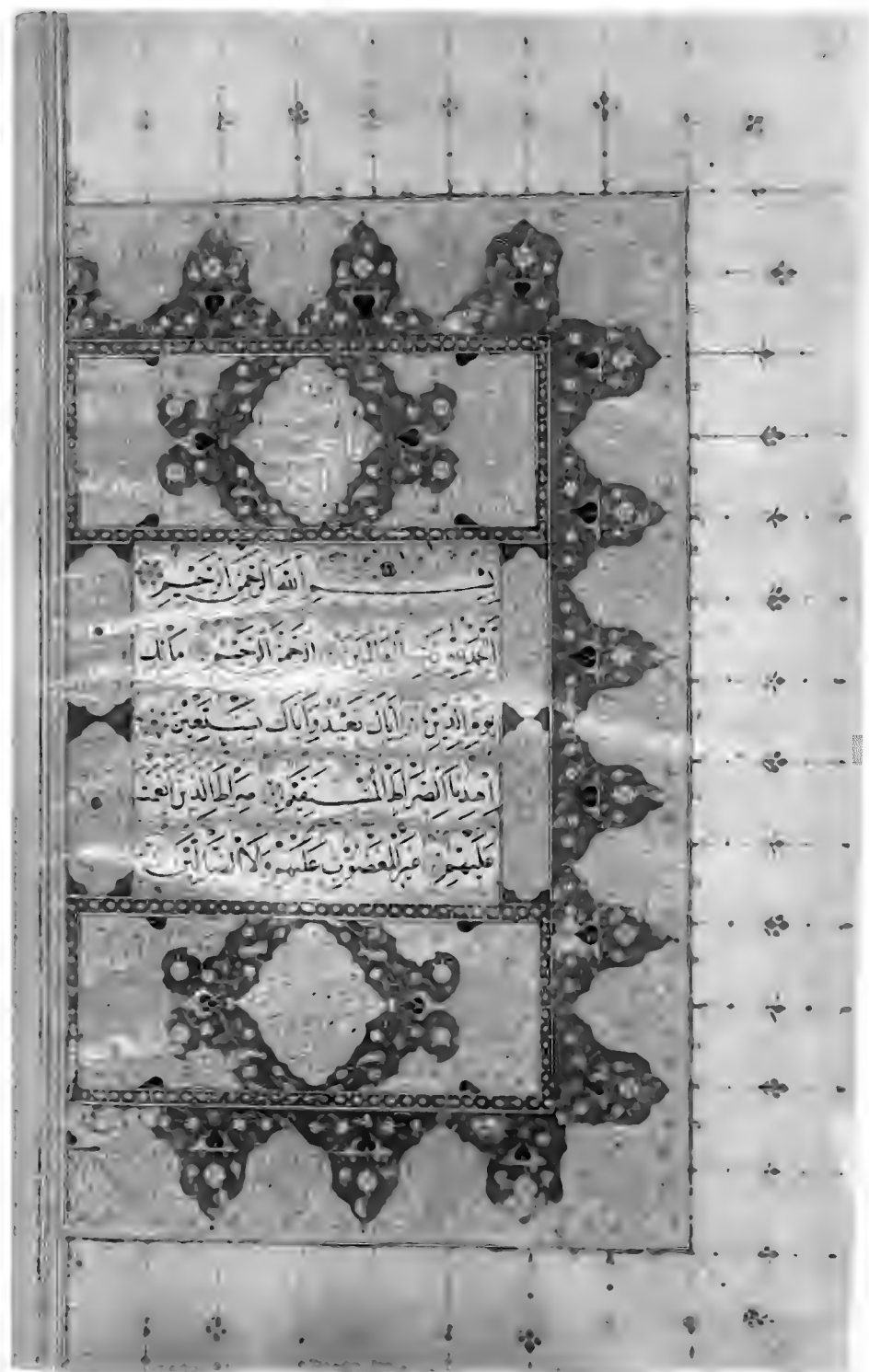




56 folios 1b-2a



56 folios 373b-374a



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 الْحُكْمُ الرَّابِعُ عَشْرُونَ  
 أَمْرٌ بِمَنْ يَكْفُرُ  
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 سَخَّ اللَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ  
 هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ  
 لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ مَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مَتَاعٌ بَعْضُهُمْ  
 حَصُونُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ بِئْسَ جُنُودٌ يُحْشَبُونَ وَذَفَّ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ  
 الرَّغْبَ يَخْرُجُونَ يَنْتَفِرُونَ مِنْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَبِرُوا  
 يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ ۖ وَلَوْ لَا أَنْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخِلَافَ  
 لَعَذَّبْتُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَكَثُرَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابُ النَّارِ ۖ ذَلِكَ  
 بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ  
 الْعِقَابِ ۖ مَا فَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ لَيْسَةٍ أَوْ نَزَعْتُمْ مِمَّا فَاتَمَّ عَلَيْهِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Single-volume Qur'an

Istanbul, AH958/AD1551

390 folios, 15.5 × 9.5 cm, with  
13 lines to the page

*Material* A fine, thin, lightly  
polished cream paper, laid, with  
6 lines to the centimetre

*Text area* 9.9 × 5.5 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 0.6 cm

*Script* The main text in naskh,  
incidentals in thulth

*Scribe* Derviş Mehmed ibn Mustafa  
Dede ibn Hamdullah

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* 16th or 17th century

*Accession no.* QUR533

1. Rado 1984, pp. 80 and 65.

2. Karatay 1962, cat.nos 819–20,  
920–23, 933, 945 and 977.

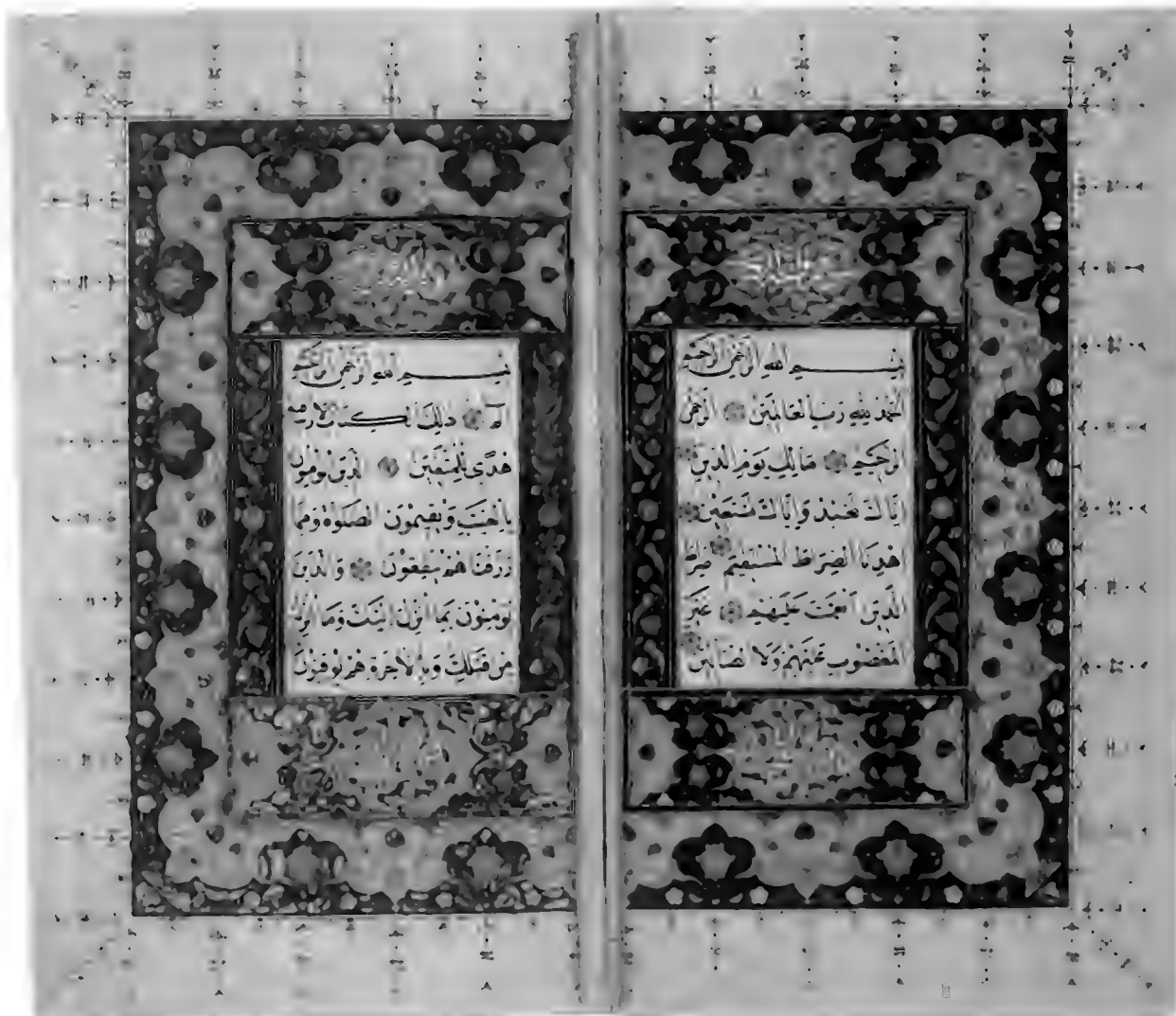
Derviş Mehmed, the calligrapher of this manuscript, was the grandson of the great Şeyh Hamdullah. His *naskh* hand has at least one notable idiosyncrasy: when writing the combination of *alif* and *lām* that makes up the Arabic definite article, he always gave the *lām* a *tarwīṣah* (a short additional stroke at the top), but never the *alif*. This feature can also be observed on at least one other published piece bearing the name of Derviş Mehmed, as well as on a piece bearing the name of his father, Mustafa Dede.<sup>1</sup> There are a number of Qur'ans by Derviş Mehmed in the Topkapı Palace Library, and their dates range from 1546 until 1625–6.<sup>2</sup>

The opening folios are fully illuminated in a fine 16th-century style. The panels on either side of the text have chains of gold arabesques interweaving with blossoms. There are borders of reciprocal gold and blue lappets with well-painted palmettes and blossoms. Surah titles are written in white or gold *thulth* and are set within a cartouche which culminates at each end in a blossom and half palmettes. The text is framed by wide gold borders. Verses are punctuated with gold circles divided into segments, and groups of ten verses are marked by rosettes placed in the margin; most of these rosettes are identical, but a different design was employed in a few cases. The colophon is in the form of a gold roundel.

The covers have sunk central medallions and corner-pieces, all gilt. All the decorated areas are surrounded by stamps with painted finials. The doublures are covered with paper splashed with gold.



\*57 folio 389b (detail)



57 folios 2b-3a



57 folios 274b-275a



58

## Single-volume Qur'an

Istanbul, *circa* 1570–1580

366 folios, 16.5 × 10.5 cm, with

13 lines to the page

*Material* A polished buff paper, laid, with an indeterminate number of lines per centimetre

*Text area* 10.1 × 5.4 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 0.8 cm

*Script* Naskh

*Scribe* Hasan ibn Ahmed

*Documentation* A colophon

*Binding* 16th or 17th century

*Accession no.* QUR45

*Comparative item* Dublin, Chester

Beatty Library, MS. 1527.<sup>1</sup>

1. Arberry 1967, no. 195; and James 1980, cat.nos. 73–4.

2. Chester Beatty Library, MS. 1527.

The calligrapher of this manuscript was almost certainly to be identified with Hasan Çelebi, one of the best known Ottoman calligraphers of the 16th century. Hasan Çelebi began his career as the slave of Ahmed Karahisari and was later adopted by the great master. Hasan died in 1594 after a long career in which he produced many manuscripts and architectural inscriptions, but the only other manuscript by him in a collection outside Turkey is a Qur'an written for Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, which is now in Dublin.<sup>2</sup>

The opening surahs are illuminated in an excellent Ottoman court style. All the panels are surrounded by bands of strapwork, and there is an outer border of reciprocal lappets in blue and gold. The surah headings are in panels with floral sprays at either end. The verses are punctuated by gold circles with red and blue dots, and the margins are ruled in gold. Gold medallions with floral sprays indicate divisions of the text such as groups of ten verses and *hizbs*. The brown morocco covers have stamped central medallions and corner-pieces of gilt leather overlay, which are decorated with floral motifs in a burgundy colour.

59

## Bifolio

Probably Cairo, AH 969/AD 1561–2

Each folio 52 × 37 cm, with

11 lines to the page

*Material* A polished off-white paper, laid, with 6 lines to the centimetre; the paper has suffered considerably from ink burn

*Text area* 38 × 23.2 cm

*Interlinear spacing* 3.5 cm

*Script* The main text in a script intermediate between rayḥān and muḥaqqaq, incidentals in thulth

*Scribe* Abu'l-Hasan al-'Usayli al-Hanafi

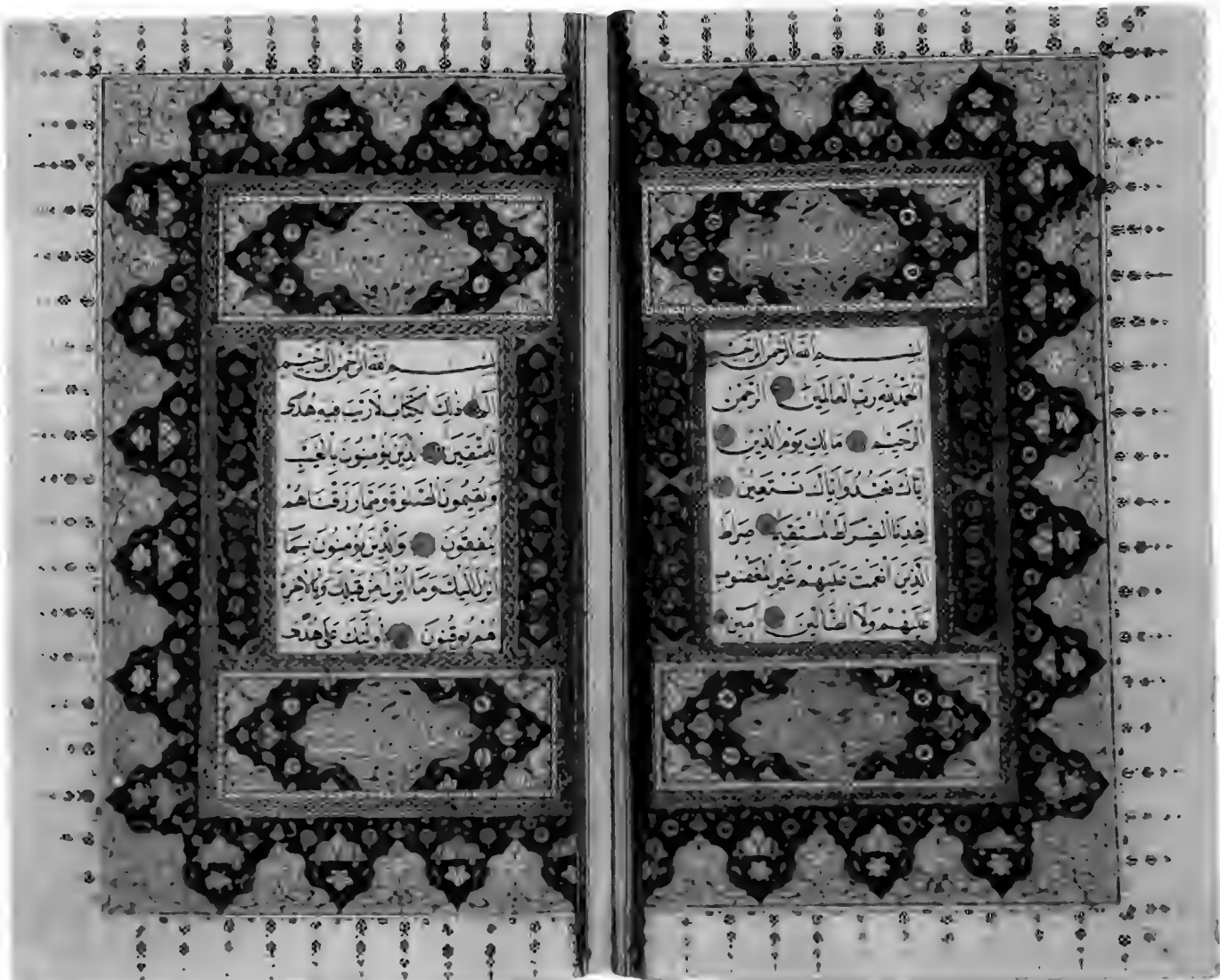
*Accession no.* QUR627

*Published* Anavian 1979, no. 59

1. It is not clear whether Cairo is mentioned in the colophon or this is an attribution.

These folios contain texts running from *Sūrat fuṣṣilat* (XLI), verse 51, to *Sūrat al-shūrā* (XLII), verse 13, and from *Sūrat al-dukhān* (XLIV), verse 41, to *Sūrat al-jāthiyah* (XLV), verse 11. Both come from a large Qur'an that appears to have been broken up after 1979, when it was shown at the Habib Anavian Gallery in New York. According to the exhibition catalogue, the Qur'an was produced 'in Egypt', that is in Cairo, in 1561–2.<sup>1</sup> The size of the manuscript, the style of the script and the use of gold with blue vocalization for the *basmalah* at the start of each surah are certainly reminiscent of the finest Mamluk Qur'ans of the 14th century, and, if this Qur'an was indeed produced in Egypt in the 16th century, it must be one of the most outstanding provincial Ottoman Qur'ans of the period.

The surah headings are in white or pale blue *thulth* and are set within gold panels with minimal arabesque decoration. The text is in black, with the word *Allāh* written in gold. The verses are separated by large gold circles with blue dots, while groups of ten verses are marked by the word '*ashar*' ('ten') written in gold *thulth* in the margin, after the Ottoman fashion. The text is framed by blue and gold rules, and there are reading notes in red.



58 folios 1b-2a



58 folios 339b-340a

الإنسان غرض ونابجابه وأدامسه الشرف وذو العكر يض قالوا  
 إن كان من عند ثم كفرته من أضامن هو في شقاو بعد  
 سربهم إلى في الأفاق وفي أنفسهم حتى يتبين لهم أنه الحق أولئك  
 برأه الله على كل شيء شهيد. ألا أنهم في قرية من قارنهم لأنه يكل شيء

محمدا

حمر عشق كذلك بوحى النك والذين من قبلك الغر  
 الحكيم له ما في السموات وما في الأرض وهو على العليم  
 تكاد السموات يتفطرن من فوقهن والملائكة يسبحون  
 بحمدهن وهم يستغفرون لمن في الأرض إلا أن هو الغفور الرحيم  
 والذين اتخذوا من دونه أوليا حفيظ عليهم وما أنت عليهم

حَمْدُ تَنْزِيلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ۝ اِنَّ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ  
وَالْاَرْضِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝ وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبْدُوْا مِنْ دَٰلٰتِ اٰيٰتٍ  
لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُوْنَ ۝ وَخِلَافَ النَّوَارِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ  
رِزْقٍ فَحْيَا بِهِ الْاَرْضُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِفُ الرِّياحُ اٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُوْنَ  
۝ نٰلِكَ اٰيٰتُ اللّٰهِ تَتْلُوْهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاِذَا بَلَغْتَ الْبَحْثَ بَعْدَ وَاٰيٰتِهِ  
بُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝ وَبِالْكَافِ اِلَّا اَتَمُّ ۝ يَسْمَعُ اٰيٰتُ اللّٰهِ تَنْتَلِيْ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ  
يَعْرِضُ مُسْتَكْبِرًا ۝ كَاٰنَ لَمْ يَسْمَعْهَا فَبَشِّرُهُ بِعَذَابِ الْيَمِّ ۝  
وَاِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا شَيْئًا اتَّخَذَهَا مَازٍ ۝ وَاَلَيْكَ لَهمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ۝  
مَنْ زُجِرَ اَلَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَا يَغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مَا كَسَبُوْا شَيْئًا وَلَا مَا اتَّخَذُوْا  
مِنْ دُوْنِ اَوْلِيَآءٍ ۝ وَهمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝ هٰذَا هُدًى وَالَّذِيْنَ

## Single-volume Qur'an

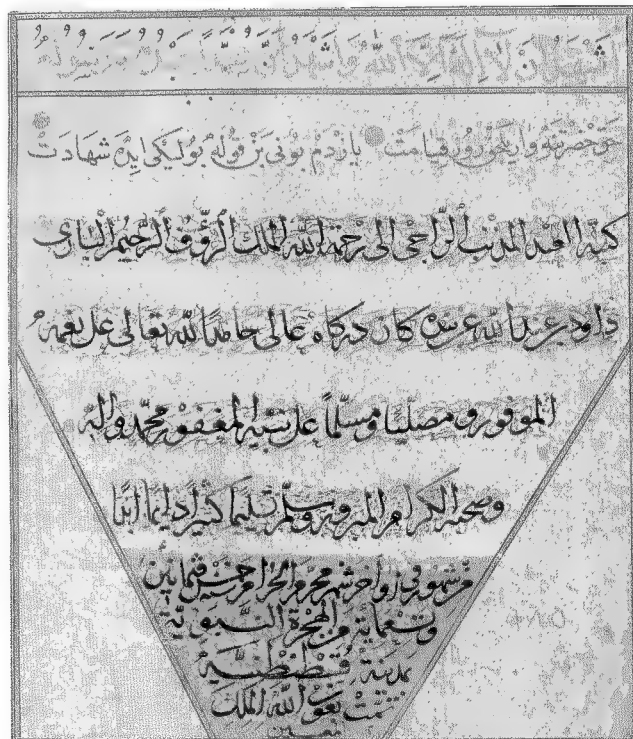
Istanbul, AH985/AD1577

408 folios, 27.2 × 18.5 cm, with  
11 lines to the page  
*Material* A buff, polished paper,  
laid, but with little visible detail  
*Text area* 17.6 × 10.9 cm  
*Interlinear spacing* 1.5 cm  
*Script* Main text in naskh,  
incidentals in riqā'  
*Scribe* Davud ibn Abdullah  
*Documentation* A colophon  
*Binding* Ottoman or Mamluk,  
15th century  
*Accession no.* QUR214

The scribe of this manuscript describes himself in the colophon as a 'slave of the imperial household' (*an bendegân-i dergâh-i âlî*) and tells us that the manuscript was copied in Istanbul, which he calls Kostantiniyye ('Constantinople'). As is often the case, his name does not appear in the official registers of the imperial household, where the names of many, but by no means of all, the artists and scribes who worked at the Ottoman court were recorded.

The opening pages of text have wide side panels with interlocking cusped shapes in gold and blue set with peony and lotus blossoms. The titles and verse counts are given in panels above and below the text. In the outer margins and in those above and below the text there are triangular hasps with *rûmîs* stemming from a central palmette. The surah headings are set in cusped cartouches within rectangular panels and are written in white against gold or coloured grounds. The rest of the panel has been filled with gold foliage or arabesques against a blue ground. The verses are separated by gold circles, and there are gold rules around the text. Every tenth verse is indicated by an inscription in the margin in red or blue, and each *juz'* is indicated by a fine marginal ornament. The text concludes with a prayer to be read upon completing the Qur'an.

The binding has probably been attached to the manuscript in recent times. The covers have medallions with a geometric motif in blind and gold tooling. The corner-pieces and the remains of an interlocking circle border survive. On the doublures there is an inscribed knot motif.



60 folio 408b (detail)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ  
الرَّحِيمِ مَمَّا إِلَيْكَ يَوْمَ الَّذِينَ يُبَايَعُكَ  
وَأَيُّكَ يَسْتَعِينُونَ أَخَذْنَا الْقِصَاصَ  
الْمُسْتَقِيمَ فَصِطَّ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ  
غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

# Concordances

## Concordance by catalogue number

Cat. 1	QUR438	Cat. 22	QUR204	Cat. 43	QUR729
Cat. 2	QUR486	Cat. 23	QUR5	Cat. 44	QUR215
Cat. 3	QUR596	Cat. 24	QUR135	Cat. 45	QUR422
Cat. 4	QUR212	Cat. 25	QUR291	Cat. 46	QUR231
Cat. 5	QUR642	Cat. 26	QUR252	Cat. 47	QUR248
Cat. 6	QUR192/477	Cat. 27	QUR602	Cat. 48	QUR206
Cat. 7	QUR95	Cat. 28	QUR237	Cat. 49	QUR625
Cat. 8	QUR128	Cat. 29	QUR413	Cat. 50	QUR63
Cat. 9	QUR4	Cat. 30	QUR323	Cat. 51	QUR96
Cat. 10	QUR171	Cat. 31	QUR56	Cat. 52	QUR59
Cat. 11	QUR525	Cat. 32	QUR3	Cat. 53	QUR153
Cat. 12	QUR137	Cat. 33	QUR114	Cat. 54	QUR82
Cat. 13	QUR241	Cat. 34	QUR130	Cat. 55	QUR429
Cat. 14	QUR298	Cat. 35	QUR251	Cat. 56	QUR420
Cat. 15	QUR605	Cat. 36	QUR178	Cat. 57	QUR533
Cat. 16	QUR213	Cat. 37	QUR198	Cat. 58	QUR45
Cat. 17	QUR371	Cat. 38	QUR292	Cat. 59	QUR627
Cat. 18	QUR123	Cat. 39	QUR111	Cat. 60	QUR214
Cat. 19	QUR432	Cat. 40	QUR60		
Cat. 20	QUR289/229	Cat. 41	QUR441		
Cat. 21	QUR34	Cat. 42	QUR494		

## Concordance by accession number

QUR3	Cat. 32	QUR178	Cat. 36	QUR371	Cat. 17
QUR4	Cat. 9	QUR192	Cat. 6	QUR413	Cat. 29
QUR5	Cat. 23	QUR198	Cat. 37	QUR420	Cat. 56
QUR34	Cat. 21	QUR204	Cat. 22	QUR422	Cat. 45
QUR45	Cat. 58	QUR206	Cat. 48	QUR429	Cat. 55
QUR56	Cat. 31	QUR212	Cat. 4	QUR432	Cat. 19
QUR59	Cat. 52	QUR213	Cat. 16	QUR438	Cat. 1
QUR60	Cat. 40	QUR214	Cat. 60	QUR441	Cat. 41
QUR63	Cat. 50	QUR215	Cat. 44	QUR477	Cat. 6
QUR82	Cat. 54	QUR229	Cat. 20	QUR486	Cat. 2
QUR95	Cat. 7	QUR231	Cat. 46	QUR494	Cat. 42
QUR96	Cat. 51	QUR237	Cat. 28	QUR525	Cat. 11
QUR111	Cat. 39	QUR241	Cat. 13	QUR533	Cat. 57
QUR114	Cat. 33	QUR248	Cat. 47	QUR596	Cat. 3
QUR123	Cat. 18	QUR251	Cat. 35	QUR602	Cat. 27
QUR128	Cat. 8	QUR252	Cat. 26	QUR605	Cat. 15
QUR130	Cat. 34	QUR289	Cat. 20	QUR625	Cat. 49
QUR135	Cat. 24	QUR291	Cat. 25	QUR627	Cat. 59
QUR137	Cat. 12	QUR292	Cat. 38	QUR642	Cat. 5
QUR153	Cat. 53	QUR298	Cat. 14	QUR729	Cat. 43
QUR171	Cat. 10	QUR323	Cat. 30		

# Documentation

## Cat. 4, folio 405b

The one in need of God the Munificent, Mahmud, entitled Qutb al-Mughaythi al-Sultani (May God—Praised be He!—forgive him at the beginning and at the end!), has been honoured to write this in the months of the year 823 of the Prophetic *hijra* (AD 1420) to the glory of God—Praised be He!—and to bring blessings upon . . .

قد تشرف بكتابته الفقير الى الله الغني محمود الملقب بقطب  
المغيث السلطاني عفا الله تعالى عنه اولاً وآخرًا في شهور سنة  
ثلاث وعشرين وثمانماية الهجرية النبوية حامداً لله تعالى  
ومصلياً . . .

## Cat. 7, folio 1a

Part 6 in the hand of Hajji 'Abd al-Ba(qi) . . . the pauper 'Abd al-Wahhab . . . the illustrious . . . fifth day of the month of Dhu Hijjah (*sic*) 1109 (15 June 1698).

سياره ششم بخط حاجي عبد البا . . . فقير عبد الوهاب  
. . . حضرت الشأن . . . پنجم شهر ذی حجة ۱۱۰۹  
. . .

## Cat. 10, folio 259a

The poor and wretched servant who yearns for the mercy of his Omniscient Lord, who . . . with the message of God the Enunciator, Ibrahim ibn Murad al-Hafiz—May God protect him from what he dreads and reward him with what cannot be counted!—copied and illuminated this in Rabi' 11 of the year 807 (October 1404) to the glory of God and to bless His prophet, Muhammad, and his family.

كتبه وذهبه العبد الحقير الفقير الراجي الى رحمة ربه الخبير  
الذي . . . ببناء الله الالفاظ ابراهيم بن مراد الحافظ وقيه الله  
من حيث يرتب ورزقه من حيث لا يحتسب في شهر ربيع  
الآخر سنة سبع وثمانماية حامداً لله ومصلياً على نبيه محمد وآله

## Cat. 12, folio 15a

The wretched pauper who admits his shortcomings, 'Abdallah, nephew of the late Shaykh Nasrallah (God's mercy be upon him!), copied this. He completed this task at the beginning of Jumada 1 of the year 840 (November 1436) in the populous city of Cairo the well-protected. May God—Praised be He!—guard it from calamity . . . !

كتبه الفقير الحقير المعترف بالتقصير عبد الله بن اخ المرحوم  
الشيخ نصر الله طاب الله ثراه فرغ من تحريره في اولي شهر جادي  
الاولى سنة اربعين وثمانماية في معمورة مصر المحروسة صانها الله  
تعالى عن الآفات . . .

## Cat. 13, folio 414a

The completion of this Exalted, . . . Noble, Glorious and Honoured Volume occurred on the Blessed Saturday, 20 Rabi' 11 of the year 844 (24 September 1440)—May God improve . . . This marks the completion of 59 *muṣḥafs* (single-volume Qur'ans) since the commencement of copying. We hope that God has accepted them and that He will approve of what is copied hereafter if He so wills. The least of servants by deed and the most noble by writing, . . . who acknowledges his shortcomings and yearns for the forgiveness of his Omnipotent Lord, 'Abdallah Yusuf ibn Baha-yi al-Din (*sic*), who is a Shafi'i by rite and a Cairene by residence, wrote this with his time-worn hand—May God forgive him and his parents, and whoever reads it or examines it and whoever hears him or watches him, and whoever prays for forgiveness, pardon and mercy with regard to the writer.

وكان الفراغ من هذه الختمة المعظمة . . . الكريمة الجليلة  
الشريفة في يوم السبت المبارك العشرين من شهر ربيع الاخرة  
سنة اربع واربعين وثمان مائة احسن الله . . . وهي تمة  
تسعة وخمسين مصحفاً من مبتدأ النسخ ونرجوا (ا) من الله  
القبول وان يحسن على ما ينتسخ بعده ان شاء الله تعالى وكتبه  
بيده الفانية اقل عبيد عملاً واكثرهم خطأ . . . المعترف  
بالتقصير الراجي عفو ربه القدير عبد الله يوسف بن بهاي  
(*sic*) الدين الشافعي مذهباً مصري بلداً غفر الله له ولولديه  
ولمن قرأ فيه او نظر فيه ولمن سمعه والناظرين اليه ولمن دعا  
لكاتبه بالتوبة والمغفرة والرحمة

## Cat. 14, folio 1a

Our Lord, the Sultan, the Master, al-Malik al-Ashraf Abu'l-Nasr Inal—May God (Praised be He!) make his kingdom last forever and . . . paradise!—has endowed this section of this Noble Qur'an, together with whichever of the thirty sections come before it and whichever of them follow it, so that the readers of the Book of God—Praised be He!—may benefit from it by reading it and copying it . . . a valid endowment . . . Let its place be in the *khānaqāh* that he has founded in the desert outside the Bab al-Nasr, in front of the Qubbat al-Nasr, in the hope that God would accept it from him. Dated 858 (1454).

وقف مولانا السلطان المالك الملك الاشرف ابو النصر اينال  
خلد الله تعالى ملكه و . . . الجنة هذا الجزؤ من هذه الربعة  
الشريفة وما بعده من تجزئة ثلثين جزؤاً على التالين لكتاب الله  
تعالى ينتفعون به قراءةً ونسخاً . . . وفقاً صحيحاً علياً . . .  
وجعل مقرها في الخانقاه الذي انشأها بالصحراء خارج باب  
النصر تجاه قبة النصر تقبلاً لله تعالى منه بتاريخ ٨٥٨

## Cat. 16, folio 303b

This Noble Volume was completed with the help of God, the Most Generous King, by the hands of the servant needful of God (Praised be He!), Ahmad ibn Yahya (May God forgive them both!), on 15 Dhu'l-Hijjah the Inviolable of the year 895 (1 November 1490) in the city of Aleppo (May God protect it from disaster!).

قد تم هذا المصحف الشريف بعون الله الملك اللطيف على  
يدى العبد الفقير الى الله تعالى احمد بن يحيى عفا الله عنها  
خامس عشر من ذي الحجة الحرام سنة خمس وتسعين ثمانئة  
بمدينة حلب حماها الله عن الكرب

## Cat. 21, folio 640b

This Noble Book was copied for one whose eminence was earned by the sword, Mercan Ağa, beloved of kings and sultans—May God prolong his estate and increase his worth!

كُتِبَ هذا المكرم الشريف باسم الجناح العالي السيفي مرجان  
آغا محبوب الملوك والسلطين ادام الله شأنه وضاعف اقداره

## Cat. 22, folio 302a

The sinful servant needful of the favour of his Omnipotent Lord, Fazlullāh ibn Velî, called Araboğlu, the poor and wretched—May God (Praised be He!) help him to reach the limit of perfection and the goal of desire, namely the favours of the Lord and the favours of the Protector, by the truth of *ṭā' hā'* and *yā' sīn* which came to us from one wise and all-knowing!—has copied this Noble Volume free of corruption and alteration and has illuminated it and embellished its parts with gold, colours and drawing on the day of 'Ashura' (10 Muharram) in the *hijrī* lunar year of 899 (22 October 1493).

وقد كتب هذا المصحف الشريف المنزه عن التحريف والتغير  
وذهبه وزين اركانه بالتبر واللون والتحرير العبد المذنب المحتاج  
الى فضل ربه القدير فضل الله بن ولي المعروف بعرب اغلى  
الفقير الحقير بلغه الله تعالى الى غاية الكمال ونهاية المرام وهو  
نعم المولى ونعم النصير بحق طه ويس الذي اتانا من لدن حكيم  
خير في يوم عاشوراء سنة تسع وتسعين وثمانئة الهجرية الهلالية

## Cat. 23, folio 336a

Abdullah el-Amâsî copied it to the glory of God—Praised be He!—in the year 900 (1494–5).

كتبه عبد الله الاماسي حامداً لله تعالى لسنة تسعمائة

## Cat. 25, folio 40b

Hamdullah, who is called Ibn al-Shaykh, wrote this.

كتب حمد لله المعروف بأبن الشيخ

## Cat. 26, folio 372b

Hamdullah ibn al-Shaykh wrote this to the glory of God Most High and to call blessings upon Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy and the Intercessor for the Islamic Community, and all his family and companions and upon all the prophets and messengers. Glory be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

كتبه حمد الله ابن الشيخ حامداً لله تعالى ومصلياً على نبي  
الرحمة وشفيع الأمة محمد وآله وصحبه اجمعين وعلى جميع  
الانبياء والمرسلين والحمد لله رب العالمين

## Cat. 32, folios 1a

This Noble Book was read and corrected before one needful of God's mercy, Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Haqq al-Sunbati al-Muqri' and vocalized according to the reading of our lord and master, the Shaykh, the Muqri', one of the seven authorized readers, that is, our lord 'Asim ibn Abi'l-Nujud al-Kufi, according to his transmitted version. This was completed on Friday, 5 Safar 1008 (28 August 1599).

قُرأت وصححت هذه الختمة الشريفة على الفقير الى الله تعالى  
الشيخ محمد بن عبد الحق السنباطي المقرئ وضبطت على  
قراءة سيدنا ومولانا الشيخ المقرئ احد قراء السبع المتواتر قراتهم  
بالاجماع وهو سيدنا عاصم بن ابي النجود الكوفي من روايته  
وكان الفراغ من ذلك في يوم الجمعة المبارك خامس شهر صفر  
الخير عام ثمان بعد الف والحمد لله

## Cat. 32, folio 389b-390a

The Word of the Omniscient King has been completed with the help of God and His good grace. The servant needful of God's mercy, Ahmad ibn Ni'matallah, copied it in the first ten days of Muharram in the year 967 (October 1559)–May it be protected from misfortunes, disasters and calamities!–in the proud city of Herat.

تم الكلام من الملك العلام بحمد الله وحسن توفيقه وكتبه  
العبد المحتاج الى رحمة الله احمد بن نعمة الله في العشر الاول  
من شهر محرم الحرام سنة سبع وستون وتسعمائة من الهجرة  
النبوية المصطفوية حميت عن الآفات والعاهات والبليات ببلدة  
فاخرة هرة

## Cat. 33, folio 315a

The servant needful of the mercy of God, the Munificent and All-Powerful King, Muhammad Husayn ibn Muhyi al-Harawi, copied this in the last ten days of Ramadan the Blessed 944 (February 1538) to the glory of God–Praised be He for His favours!–and to call blessings and peace upon Muhammad and his family.

كتبه العبد المحتاج الى رحمة الله الملك الغني القوي محمد  
حسين بن محيي الهروي في العشر الآخر من شهر رمضان  
المبارك سنة (٩٤٤) اربع واربعين وتسعمائة حامداً لله تعالى على  
نعمه ومصلياً ومسلماً على محمد وآله وسلم

## Cat. 36, folio 480b

God has spoken truthfully, and His noble prophet has spoken truthfully. We are among those who bear witness to it. Glory be to God, Lord of the Worlds. Habiballah al-Katib al-Maraghi copied and illuminated this.

صدق الله العظيم وصدق رسوله الكريم نحن على ذلك من  
الشاهدين والحمد لله رب العالمين كتبه وذهبه حبيب الله  
الكاتب المراغي

## Cat. 37, folio 717a

The copying (was completed) on Wednesday 12 Rabi' 1 of the year . . . 'Abd al-Jabbar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz copied this in the city of Herat.

تحرير في التاريخ دوازدهم روز چهارشنبه ماه ربيع الاول سنة  
. . . كتبه عبد الجبار بن عبد العزيز در شهر هرات



## Cat. 39, folio 240a

The poor and feeble servant needful of the mercy of God, the All-Forgiving and Munificent King, Ruzbihan al-Tab'i al-Shirazi, copied this to the glory of God—Praised be He for His bounty!—and to call blessings and peace upon His prophet, Muhammad, and his pure family in Sha'ban the Sublime of the year 952 of the Prophetic *hijra* (October 1545).

كتبه العبد الضعيف الفقير المحتاج الى رحمة الله الملك الغفر  
الغني روزبهان الطبعي الشيرازي حامداً لله تعالى على نعمه  
ومصلياً ومسلماً على نبيه محمد وآله الطاهرين في شهر شعبان  
المعظم سنة اثنين وخمسين وتسعمائة من الهجرة النبوية

## Cat. 40, folio 382a

God's servant, Ruzbihan Muhammad Tab'i Shirazi, has been honoured to copy it.

قد تشرف بتحريره العبد روزبهان محمد طبعي شيرازي

## Cat. 43, folio 1a

Glory be to God, who revealed the Book to His servant. Shah Jahan ibn Jahangir Shah ibn . . . wrote this.

الحمد لله الذي انزل على عبده الكتاب حرره شاه جهان بن  
جهانكير شاه بن . . .

## Cat. 43, folio 203a

This Noble Volume was completed in the middle of Sha'ban the Glorious in the year 959 (July 1552).

تم هذه (sic) المصحف المكرم في اوسط شهر شعبان المعظم  
سنة تسع وخمسين وتسعمائة

## Cat. 44, folio 192a

The worn-out servant, Asadallah Kirmani—May God make him achieve the object of his aspirations!—copied this.

كتبه العبد الفاني اسد الله كرمانى بلغه الله غاية الاماني

## Cat. 45, folio 320a

The copying of this Noble and Glorious Volume—'No falsehood can approach it from before or behind: it is sent down by one full of wisdom, worthy of all praise' (XLI, 42)—was completed by the hand of the feeble servant needful of the pardon and forgiveness of God, Husayn al-Fakhkhar al-Shirazi to the glory of God—Praised be He for His abundant favour—and to bless Muhammad, His prophet dispatched with full proof, and his pure family in the month of Ramadan the Blessed of the year 972 (April 1565), in the Abode of Power, Shiraz.

نجز كتابة المصحف المكرم المجيد الذي لا يأتيه الباطل من  
بين يديه ولا من خلفه تنزيل من حكيم حميد على يد  
العبد الضعيف الفقير الى عفو الله وغفرانه حسين الفخار  
الشيرازي حامداً لله تعالى على نعمه السابغة ومصلياً على نبيه  
المبعوث بالحجة البالغة محمد وآله الطاهرين في شهر رمضان  
المبارك سنة اثنين وسبعين وتسعمائة بدار الملك شيراز

## Cat. 45, folio 320b

This Glorious Word of God is in the fine hand . . . of Mawlana Husayn Fakhkhar Shirazi—May God hallow his dear secret! I bear witness before God that it is worth 300 *ashrafis*. The servant Ahmad al-Tabrizi.

ين كلام الله مجيد از خطوط خوب . . . مولانا حسين  
فخار شيرازى قدس الله سره العزيز است بينى و بين الله  
ميصدق اشرفى ميارزد العبد احمد التبريزى

## Cat. 45, folio 320b

Truly, what His Excellency Aqa Mirza Ahmad has written is absolutely and truly correct. 'Abd al-Husayn.

لحق آنچه جناب اقا ميرزا احمد نوشته اند محض صدق و  
صدق محض است عبد الحسين

## Cat. 45, folio 320b

What these distinguished calligraphers have written in the margin is correct, but the late Mawlana—May God hallow his secret!—had an even greater capacity as a brilliant master . . . Truly, the calligraphers of today . . . cannot (rival) the late . . . I am the lowliest servant . . . Rahim Gurji.

آنچه حضرات خوشنویسها در حاشیه نوشته‌اند صدق است بلکه زیادت از آن گنجایش دارد مرحوم [م]ولانا قدس [س]ره استاد [ما]هر بوده‌اند . . . ندارم [ا]لحق اهل [خ]ط این زمان . . . ل این مرحوم . . . نمیتوانند . . . کنند وانا [الع]بد [ال]قل . . . راحم گرجی

## Cat. 47, folio 360a

'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni wrote this.

کتابه عبد القادر الحسینی

## Cat. 49, folio 18a

The poor servant 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Muqaddam—May God make his future circumstances better than than they have been in the past!—in the month of Jumada 1 in the year 979 (November 1571).

کتابه العبد الفقیر علی بن محمد بن مقدّم جعل الله مستقبل احواله خیراً مما تقدّم في شهر جمادی الاولى سنة تسع وسبعین وتسعمائة

## Cat. 50, folio 249a

The feeble servant needful of the mercy of God, the Most Holy King, Muzaffar ibn Ahmad ibn Kamal ibn 'Iwad ibn Muzaffar ibn Shams al-Din Husayn ibn Amirah, son of the seal of sages and searchers after truth, Nasir al-Din Muhammad al-Tusi—May God comfort his spirit and ensconce him in the chambers of paradise!—has been honoured to copy this Glorious Word of God in Rajab the Respected of the year 972 (February 1565).

فقد تشرف بتحریر هذا الکلام الله المجید العبد الضعیف المحتاج الى رحمة الله الملك القدوسی مظفر بن احمد بن مظفر بن کمال بن عوض بن مظفر بن شمس الدین حسن بن امیره بن خاتم الحکماء والحقّقین نصیر الدین محمد الطوسی روح الله روحه واسکنه في غرف الجنان في تاریخ شهر رجب المرجب سنة اثنتین وسبعین وتسعمائة

## Cat. 51, folio 302a

'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Muqaddam copied this with his time-worn hand in the month of Sha'ban in the year (9)93 (July 1585) in the excellent city of Karbala'—Blessings and praise upon the one laid to rest there!

کتابه بیده الفانیة علی بن محمد بن مقدّم في شهر شعبان لسنه ۹۳(۹) وببلدة طیبہ کربلا علی راقدها التحيّة والثناء

## Cat. 52, folio 1a

Confident of the kindness of God, the Beneficent King, Jani Beg Sultan ibn Muhammad Payandah ibn Muhammad Baqi Tarkhan.

الواثق بلطف الله الملك المنان جاني بیگ سلطان بن محمد پاینده بن محمد باقی ترخان

## Cat. 53, folio 427a

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman—May God forgive him and his parents!—completed the copying of this copy of the Word of the Bountiful King in the year 923 (1517).

فرغ من تحریر هذا الکتاب من کلام الملك الوهاب محمد بن عبد الرحمن غفر الله له ولوالديه في سنة ثلاث وعشرين وتسعمائة

## Cat. 54, folio 398a

The copying of this Noble Volume was completed in the latter part of Sha'ban the Glorious in the *hijrah* of the Prophet—May God Bless him and grant him salvation!—in the year of 938 (March 1532).

قد وقع الفراغ من تحریر هذا المصحف الشريف في اواخر شعبان المعظم في هجرة النبی صلی الله علیه وسلم سنة ثمان وثلاثین وتسعمائة

## Cat. 55, folio 340a

The completion of the copying out of this Noble Volume occurred at the hands of the feeble and wasted servant Mustafa ibn Nasuh es-Selânîkî at the end of Dhu'l-Hijjah in the year 912 (April 1507) to the glory of God and as a blessing.

وقع الفارغ من تحرير هذا المصحف الكريم من يد العبد الضعيف النحيف مصطفى بن نصوح السلانكي في اواخر شهر ذي القعدة من شهور سنة اثني عشر وتسعمائة حامداً لله ومصلياً

## Cat. 57, folio 389b

Derviş Mehmed ibn Mustafa Dede ibn Hamdullah called Ibn al-Shaykh wrote this in the year 958 (1551).

كتبه درويش محمد مصطفى دده بن حمد الله المعروف بابن الشيخ في سنة ثمان وخمسين وتسع مائة

## Cat. 58, folio 365b

The poor and miserable sinner needful of the mercy of his Munificent and Only Lord, Hasan ibn Ahmed, copied this to the glory of God—Praised be He!—and to bless His Prophet and his pure family.

كتبه الفقير الحقير المذنب المحتاج الى رحمة ربه الغنى الاحد حسن بن احمد حامداً لله تعالى ومصلياً على نبيه وآله الطاهرين اجمعين

## Cat. 60, folio 408b

The sinful servant who yearns for the mercy of God, the Compassionate King, the Merciful, the Creator, Davud ibn Abdullah, one of the servants of the sublime court, copied this to the glory of God—Praised be He for His liberal favours—and to bring blessings and peace upon His forgiven prophet, Muhammad, and his noble and blessed family and companions—May He grant them permanent and absolute salvation!—at the end of Muharram the Inviolable in the year 985 (April 1577) in the city of Kostantiniyye. It was completed with the help of God, the Beneficent King.

كتبه العبد المذنب الراجي الى رحمة الله الملك الرؤف الرحيم الباري داود بن عبد الله عن بنده كان درگاه عالي حامداً لله تعالى على نعمه الوفور ومصلياً ومسلماً على نبيه المغفور محمد وآله وصحبه الكرام المبرور وسلم تسليم كثيراً دائماً ابداً من شهور في اواخر شهر محرم الحرام سنة خمس وثمانين وتسعمائة من الهجرة النبوية بمدينة قسطنطينية تمت بعون الله الملك المعين

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# Index

- 'Abd al-Ba(qi), Hajji (possible calligrapher of cat.7), 34, 245
- 'Abd al-Jabbar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (copyist of cat.37), 140, 247
- 'Abdallah al-Tabbakh, calligrapher, 126
- 'Abdallah ibn akh Shaykh Nasrallah (copyist of cat.12), 56, 245
- 'Abdallah Yusuf ibn Baha' al-Din al-Shafi'i al-Misri (copyist of cat.13), 58, 245
- 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni (copyist of cat.47), 115, 196, 215, 249
- 'Abd al-Rahim Khwarazmi, *also* Anisi, calligrapher, 225
- 'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Sa'igh, calligrapher, 46
- Abdullah el-Amâsî (copyist of cat.23), 96, 247
- Abu'l-Hasan al-'Usayli al-Hanafi (copyist of cat.59), 238
- Ahmad ibn Ni'matallah (copyist of cat.32), 118, 247
- Ahmad ibn Yahya (copyist and perhaps illuminator of cat.16), 66, 246
- Ahmed Karahisari (possible copyist of cat.56), 128, 224-227, 232, 238
- Akbar, Mughal emperor, 214, 215n
- album, 34, 128; Fatih Albums, 226; Muhammadquli Album, 184n; Polier Album, 184n
- Aleppo, 46, 66 (cat.16), 246
- 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Muqaddam (copyist of cat.49 and 51), 206, 212, 249
- Anatolia, 10, 14, 46, 108, 224, 227
- Aqqoyunlu, 10, 11, 14-15, 38, 42, 46, 225, 226, 227
- Asadallah Kirmani, *also* Sayyid Asadallah al-Kirmani (possible copyist of cat.44), 128, 182, 224-225, 227, 248
- authentications, examples 245 (cat.7), 248-249 (cat.45)
- Babur, Mughal emperor, 10, 102, 214
- Baghdad, 14, 16, 212, 225
- Bahjat al-manâhij*, 184
- Bahram Mirza, Safavid prince, 128
- Bayezid II, Ottoman sultan, 69, 227
- Baysunghur, Timurid prince, *also* Boi Sanghoor Meerza, Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh, 26; the 'Baysunghur' Qur'an, 15, 18-23, 24 (cat.4, 5), 108; the *Shāhnāmah* of Prince Baysunghur, 28
- Berlin, Islamisches Museum, 145, 146, 148, 149n, 184n
- biḥārī* script, 12, 102, 220; used in cat.27, 28
- Bijapur, Archaeological Museum, 102n
- bindings, 10, 15; pre-modern examples on cat.4, 5, 7-9, 11, 13, 14, 16-26, 30-35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43-46, 48-50, 52-55, 57, 58, 60
- Budaq Qazvini, visitor to Shiraz, 145
- Bukhara, 115, 124 (cat.33), 128
- Cairo, 56 (cat.12), 226, 238 (cat.59), 245; *khānaqāh* of Sultan Inal, 62, 246; Northern Cemetery, tomb of Qansawh Abu Sa'id, 62; National Library, 23n, 56, 220
- certificate of commissioning, example, 246 (cat.21)
- Chicago, Oriental Institute, 56
- colophons, 113; examples, 245-250 (cat.4, 10, 12, 13, 16, 22, 23, 25, 26, 32, 33, 36, 37, 39, 40, 43-45, 47, 49-51, 53-55, 57, 58, 60); false colophons, 28-29, 128, 200
- Constantinople, 10, 69, 242, 250; *see also* Istanbul
- Copenhagen, David Collection, 22
- Davud ibn Abdullah (copyist of cat.60), 242, 250
- Dawran, 220
- Derviş 'Ali, calligrapher, 88
- Derviş Mehmed bin Mustafa Dede ibn Hamdullah (copyist of cat.57), 236, 250
- Divān* of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi, 128, 145, 148, 149
- Divān* of Hidayat, 39
- Divān* of Husayni, 116
- dīwānī* script, 56
- du'ā-i khatm*, *also du'ā-i khātim*, (prayer to be read upon completing a reading of the Qur'an), 12, 114, 128, 150, 158, 164, 181, 184, 190
- Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, 15n, 38, 39n, 42, 48, 66, 108, 115n, 140, 148, 150, 158, 172, 238
- Egypt, 10, 46, 58 (cat.13), 172; *see also* Cairo
- endowment notices, 246 (cat.14)
- facsimiles and forgeries, 14-15, 22-23
- fālnāmah*, *also qur'ah li'l-fāl* (instructions on using the Qur'an for divination), 12, 58, 114, 128, 150, 181, 184, 190
- Fazlullah ibn Veli, called Araboğlu or Ibn al-'Arab (copyist and illuminator of cat.22), 69, 94, 246
- Geneva, private collection, 22, 23n, 170, 220; Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan Collection, 100, 102n
- Golconda, 115, 196, 215
- Habiballah al-Katib al-Maraghi (copyist and illuminator of cat.36), 113, 136, 247
- Halvetî order, 227
- Hasan Çelebi, *also* Hasan ibn Ahmed (copyist of cat.58), 225, 238, 250
- Herat, 10, 14, 15, 18, 24 (cat.2), 26, 28-29 (cat.4), 34, 48, 113-115, 116 (cat.30), 118 (cat.31, 32), 124 (cat.33), 126, 128-130 (cat.35), 136 (cat.36), 140 (cat.37), 215, 216, 225, 247
- Hibatallah al-Husayni, calligrapher, 215n
- Houston, Soudavar collection, 22
- Husayn al-Fakhkhar al-Shirazi (copyist of cat.45), 115, 184, 248-249
- Hyderabad, 184
- Ibn al-Suhrawardi, calligrapher, 15, 16
- Ibrahim al-Amidi, illuminator, 46, 48
- Ibrahim ibn Murad al-Hafiz (copyist and illuminator of cat.10), 48, 245
- Ibrahim Mirza ibn Shahrukh, Mughayth al-Saltanah wa'l-Din, *also* Ibrahim Sultan (possible patron of cat.4), 15, 26, 29
- Inal, Sultan, *also* al-Malik al-Ashraf Inal (donor of cat.14), 62, 246
- India, 10, 11, 12, 52, 102, 104 (cat.27, 28), 108 (cat.29), 115, 142, 170, 196 (cat.47), 200, 214-215, 216-217 (cat.52), 220 (cat.53)
- Iran, 10, 11, 12, 14-15, 16 (cat.1), 24 (cat.3), 34 (cat.6, 7), 46, 48, 64, 66, 70 (cat.17, 18), 102, 108, 113-115, 126 (cat.34), 128, 130, 142 (cat.38), 170, 172, 182 (cat.44), 184, 196 (cat.47), 200 (cat.48), 206 (cat.49, 50), 214, 215, 216, 220, 224, 225, 226, 227; *see also* Herat, Samarqand, Shiraz
- Iraq, 10, 16 (cat.1), 64, 212, 214
- Iskandar Sultan, Timurid prince, 26
- İskendernâme* of Ahmedi, 64
- Istanbul, 10, 11, 38, 69, 88-89 (cat.21), 94 (cat.22), 128, 130, 224, 226, 227, 228, 232 (cat.56), 236 (cat.57), 238 (cat.58), 242 (cat.60); library of Ayasofya, 225; Fatih Mosque, 224; Museum of Turkish & Islamic Arts, 38, 70, 116, 149n, 206, 227n; mosque of Piyale Paşa, 224, 225; sebil and tomb of Mimar Sinan, 224, 227; Süleymaniye, 224, 225; Süleymaniye Library, 70, 80; Topkapı Palace Archives, 69, 94, 124; Topkapı Palace Library, 69, 88, 89n, 94, 115n, 116, 136, 149n, 182, 184, 225, 226, 227n, 232, 236; University Library, 144
- Ja'far Baysunghuri, calligrapher, 26
- Jāmi' al-uşūl* of Ibn al-Athir, 48
- Janibeg ibn Muhammad Payandah (owner of cat.52), 215, 216, 249
- Karamshah Tabrizi (possible copyist of cat.1), 15, 16
- Kara Memi, illuminator, 11, 225, 226
- Karbala', 212 (cat.51), 214, 249
- Khalil, Sultan, Aqqoyunlu ruler, 39
- Khamsah* of Nizami, 113, 145, 149n
- Kufic script, used in cat.7, 8, 10, 20, 30, 32, 33, 35
- Kulliyāt* of Sa'di, 113, 144, 145, 148, 149, 150
- 'Iacquer', 114, 116, 142, 184
- Lahore, 214, 215n
- Leningrad Public Library, 149n
- London, British Library, 88, 118, 124, 128, 149n, 214, 215n; Keir Collection, 114, 115n, 124; Royal Asiatic Society, 149n
- Maghrib, the, 100, 108
- Mahmud, Khwajah Jalal al-Din, called Qutb al-Mughaythi al-Sultani (copyist of cat.4), 26, 245
- Mamluk, 10, 11, 23n, 46, 48 (cat.10), 62 (cat.14), 64 (cat.15), 80, 88, 94, 225, 226, 238, 242; *see also* Aleppo, Cairo, Egypt

- Manchester, John Rylands University Library, 228
- Maqṣud 'Alī Sharīf Tabrizī, calligrapher, 140
- Maraghah, 136 (cat. 36)
- Mashhad, 18, 21; Aṣṭān-i Quds Library, 15n, 16, 21, 22, 24, 29n, 38, 70, 140, 148, 196
- Masnavī* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, 116
- Mawlana Bābā al-Tabrizī, illuminator, 113
- Mawlana Malik Daylāmī, calligrapher, 21-22
- Mehmed II, 'the Conqueror', Ottoman sultan, 48, 69, 89
- Mercan Aḡa (patron of cat. 21), 69, 88-89, 246
- Mir Mūsā, binder, 94
- Mu'ayyad Shaykh, Sultan al-, Mamluk ruler, 46
- Mughal, 10, 11, 12, 102, 113, 115, 172, 200, 214
- Muhammad Hashim Afshar, Prince, minister of education, 21
- Muhammad Husayn ibn Muhyī al-Harawī (copyist of cat. 33), 124, 128, 247
- Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Haqq al-Sunbatī al-Muqri' (annotator of cat. 32), 118, 247
- Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān (copyist of cat. 53), 220, 249
- Muhammad ibn al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Tughra'i, called Mantarjī, calligrapher, 70
- Muhammad ibn Ḥasan al-Tibī, calligrapher, 226
- Muhammad ibn Jamāl al-Dīn Husayn al-Fakhkhār, Jalāl al-Dīn, calligrapher, 184, 215
- Muhammad ibn Taj al-Dīn Haydar Shirazī, illuminator, 113
- Muhammad Kirmani, calligrapher, 225, 227n
- muḥaqqāq* script, 12, 15, 18, 56, 76, 102, 114, 216; used in cat. 1-3, 7-9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 29, 35, 36, 40-43, 46, 48, 50, 53, 59
- Muhyī ibn Ḥasan al-Harawī al-Khurasānī, calligrapher, 124
- Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 228
- Mun'im al-Dīn Awhadī Husaynī, calligrapher, 145, 148
- musalsal* ('chain') script, 226, 227n
- Mustafa ibn Nasuh es-Selānikī (copyist of cat. 55), 228, 250
- Mustafa Rakīm, calligrapher, 226
- Muzaffar ibn Ahmad ibn Muzaffar ibn Kamāl ibn 'Iwād ibn Muzaffar ibn Shams al-Dīn Ḥasan Amirah ibn Nasir al-Dīn Muhammad al-Tusi (copyist of cat. 50), 206, 249
- Nadīr Shāh, ruler of Iran, 19, 21, 23
- Na'im al-Dīn al-Katīb, Hajjī, calligrapher, also Na'im al-Dīn ibn Sadr al-Dīn Mudhahhib, 145
- Nasir al-Dīn Shāh, Qajar ruler, 21, 24
- Nasir ibn Muhammad, illuminator, 113
- naskh* script, 12, 14, 69, 76, 102, 108, 114, 216, 224, 226; used in cat. 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16-18, 21-26, 28, 30-36, 38-40, 43-48, 49-51, 53-58, 60; *naskh faḍḍah*, 46
- nasta'liq* script, 10, 12, 225; used in cat. 43, 45
- New York: Freer Gallery, 23n; Metropolitan Museum of Art, 22, 149n; New York Public Library, 118
- notices of attribution, see authentications
- Nur al-Dīn Ahmad ibn Bāhā' al-Dīn 'Alī, illuminator, 113
- Okay, Necmeddin, binder, 232n
- Ottoman, 10, 11, 12, 26, 34, 38, 39, 46, 48 (cat. 10), 58, 66, 69, 76 (cat. 19), 80 (cat. 20), 88, 94, 96 (cat. 23, 24), 100 (cat. 25, 26), 108, 113, 124, 128, 130, 142, 182, 196, 212, 214, 216, 217, 224-227, 228 (cat. 54, 55), 238, 242; see also Istanbul, Turkey
- Oxford, Bodleian Library, 115n, 144, 145, 148, 149, 150
- paper: dating of, 22-23; European, 28, 128, 158, 232; manufacture of, 20; standard sizes, 172
- Pentateuch, Hebrew, 52
- Pir Budaq, Qaraqoyunlu prince, 38
- Pir Muhammad al-Thānī, calligrapher, 145, 148
- Qajar, 21, 28
- Qansawh al-Ghawri, Mamluk sultan, 226
- Qaraqoyunlu, 10, 11, 14, 38, 215
- Qazvin, 11, 113, 144, 172-181 (cat. 43), 190-196 (cat. 46)
- Quchan (formerly Khabushan), also Cochoon, 18, 19, 21, 24
- Qutbshahi, 115, 184, 196, 215
- rayḥān* script, used in cat. 19, 24, 46, 59
- restorations, 28, 130
- riqā'* script, used in cat. 16, 18, 22, 30-34, 46, 48, 53, 55, 60
- Ruzbihan Muhammad of Shiraz (copyist and illuminator of cat. 39, copyist only of cat. 40), 113, 115, 144-149, 150, 158, 248
- Safavid, 10, 11, 96, 113-115, 126, 144, 172, 190, 212, 214, 215, 226; see also Iran
- Samarqand, 10, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24 (cat. 2), 46
- San'a', Great Mosque, 52
- sancak* Qur'an, 70
- seals, examples in cat. 12, 25, 32, 38, 39, 43, 51, 52
- Şeyh Ḥamdullah (possible copyist of cat. 25, 26), 12, 69, 100, 227, 228, 236, 246-247
- Shah Jahan, Mughal emperor (owner of cat. 43), 115, 172, 200, 214, 248
- Shāhnāmāh* of Firdawsī, 28, 113
- Shiraz, 10, 11, 14-15, 26 (cat. 4), 38-39 (cat. 8), 42 (cat. 9), 113, 114, 115, 144-149, 150 (cat. 39), 158 (cat. 40), 164 (cat. 41), 170 (cat. 42), 172-181 (cat. 43), 184 (cat. 45), 190-196, 248 (cat. 46), 196, 220, 225; *āstānah* of Mawlana Ḥusām al-Dīn Ibrahim, 144-145, 148
- Sinān al-Dīn Yūsuf Sūnbul, mystic, 227
- Sind, 215, 216-217 (cat. 52)
- storage practices, 128
- Süleyman the Magnificent, Ottoman sultan, 225, 227, 232
- Sultanate, 214
- Syria, 10, 46, 172; see also Aleppo
- Tabriz, 11, 14-15, 26, 38-39 (cat. 8), 42 (cat. 9), 113, 118, (cat. 31), 128-130 (cat. 35), 140, 144, 224, 225, 226, 227
- Tafsīr al-gharīb* of al-Wahidī, 58
- Tahmasp, Shah (possible patron of cat. 43), 12, 172
- tawqī'* script, 140
- Tehran, 21, 24, 145; Gulistan Palace Library, 21, 22, 26, 28, 184; Malik Library, 22, 26; Museum of Ancient Iran, 21, 22, 23n, 124, 145, 148; National Library, 22; private collection, 124
- thulth* script, 12, 18, 56, 69, 114, 224; used in cat. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21-23, 29, 33, 35-41, 43-45, 47-54, 56, 57, 59
- Timur (Tamerlane; possible patron of cat. 2), 10, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 24, 46, 102, 214
- Timurid, 10, 11, 14-15, 46, 48, 66, 69, 80, 88, 102, 108, 113, 116, 214, 226
- Turkey, 12, 70 (cat. 17, 18), 128, 220, 225, 238; see also Istanbul, Ottoman
- Turkoman, 10, 14-15, 66, 69, 94, 113, 144, 226; see also Aqqoyunlu, Qaraqoyunlu
- Ulughbeg (possible patron of cat. 2), 19, 20, 24
- 'Umar Aqta' (possible copyist of cat. 2), 18-19, 21, 24
- Uzun Ḥasan, Aqqoyunlu ruler, 15, 38, 227
- waqfiyyah*, see endowment notices
- wars* (*memecylon tinctorium*), 94n
- Washington, DC, Sackler Gallery of Asian Art, 128, 145, 148, 150, 158
- workshop practices, 26, 46, 94, 144-145
- Yahya al-Sufī, calligrapher, 224, 227
- Ya'qub Beg, Aqqoyunlu ruler, 15, 38, 42, 225
- Yaqut al-Musta'simī, calligrapher, 14, 69, 114, 116, 142, 200
- Yemen, 52
- Zand, 158
- Zayn al-'Abidīn ibn Muhammad al-Katīb al-Shirazī, calligrapher, 15, 42